DESCRIPTIVE EXCURSIONS

THROUGH

SOUTH WALES

AND

MONMOUTHSHIRE,

IN THE YEAR 1804,

AND THE

FOUR PRECEDING SUMMERS.

BY E. DONOVAN, F.L.S.

AUTHOR OF THE

"*BRITISH ZOOLOGY*,"

IN TWENTY VOLUMES, &c.

EMBELLISHED WITH

THIRTY-ONE PLATES OF VIEWS, ANTIQUITIES, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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SKETCH

OF A

DESCRIPTIVE TOUR

THROUGH

MONMOUTHSHIRE, AND WALES, &c

CHAP. X.

Departure from Pyle.—Ancient British sculpture near Court-y-Davydd house.—Margam village: Ruin of the elegant chapter house of Margam; and foundation of its old abbey.—Gardens,—Conservatory,—Collection of antique statuary, and other remains of Grecian and Roman art.—Parish church, an admired example of Anglo-Norman architecture: elaborately carved monuments in cemetery of the Mansel family:—fanciful epitaph on Evan Rise, the huntsman.—Charming view from the summit of Mynydd Mawr.—Old British cross of Margam.—

Eggwls Nunne.—Roman memorial of Pompeius Carantopius.—Kenfig.—Dangerous banditti.—Kenfig pool and castle.—Taybach.—Adventures at Aberavon.

AROUSING from my slumbers at a much earlier hour than usual, on the morning after we slept at Pyle, I was not a little pleased to observe even the feeble rays of the sun darting through the curtains of my chamber window. Such an indication of better weather was rather unexpected, from the cheerless aspect of the sky at the close of the day before, which was lowering, dark, and rainy; and seemed to promise a long continuance of such weather. At this particular crisis this change was still more acceptable, because we had intended, if circumstances would permit, to make certain new arrangements in our mode of travelling over the adjacent parts of Glamorganshire.

An

An excursion taken between Pyle and Neath the summer before, with the dull formality of post-chaise tourists, allowed us only half an hour's amusement among the curiosities of Margam, and the liberty of admiring the beauties of Britton ferry for a still shorter interval of time, before we were hurried down the vale, *Cwm-nedh*; here we caught a transient glimpse *en passant* of the Knoll, and finished a tour of observation in the fashionable routine, with an excellent dinner at the ship in Neath.—But we were now aware of other objects to be found in this vicinity, that equally interest the passing stranger. Among those are the old castle and pool of Kenfig: various sepulchral memorials of distant times, that are scattered over the face of the country, and the noble copper works of Taybach. With the design of embracing the whole of these in our latter visit, it was proposed between myself and fellow traveller, that one day, if possible, should be devoted to a pedestrian ramble of a few miles, within the circuit

of which they would be comprised; not doubting but this might be accomplished with the utmost convenience, and leave it in our power at the termination of an afternoon's walk, to reach the town of Neath before sun-set.

The loveliness of the morning as the sun rose higher, and dispersed the misty dews that hovered upon the hills, confirmed us in the intention before conceived. But ere we left the inn we took breakfast, and then sallied forth in high spirit upon our devious expedition.

At first we saw nothing to recompense us for the trouble of a dirty walk along the main road, which we were to pursue only till we reached Margam. Vegetation was beginning to revive under the genial influence of the sun, which by this time shed a mild and attempered radiance over the face of nature. The plants that skirted the edges and displayed

their

ANCIENT BRITISH CROSSES

at

COURT-Y-DAVYDD.

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their unfolding blossoms of every hue, were those only that are most frequent every where, at least with the exception of a wild variety of *Aquilegia vulgare*, bearing blossoms of a beautiful white, instead of purple colour, that flourished in one particular spot.

About a mile beyond Pyle are the two curious relics of ancient British sculpture, to which the remarks of Mr Strange directs the more inquisitive traveller *. These answer at the present time the purpose of a foot path bridge on the right hand side of the public road, the rivulet that passes under them flowing directly across the highway. The current is supplied by the stream that passes close to an adjacent house and farm, called Court-y-Davydd, as Mr. Strange mentions; but I am sorry to say his account of them is not remarkable for its accuracy.—In point of size, there is no great dissimilarity between the two

* Archæologia.

massive slabs in consideration, each being about six feet in length, three in breadth, and one in thickness. They are not placed parallel to each other, as formerly, but endways, one extremity of each being supported upon a few stones that rise out of the middle of the stream, and the other resting on the bank of the path way. Both lie with the face uppermost, and bear the same device, namely, the figure of an ancient cross, confined within the limits of a circle. The carving is alike rude and bold in both, and from the great depth to which the figures have been cut in the stone are still very prominent, notwithstanding the injury they have sustained. The lower half of each stone, or compartment below the cross, is charged with letters resembling those upon the oldest monuments in the church-yard of Lantwit-Major; but they are unfortunately in such a state of mutilation, as to baffle every attempt to define the greater part of them, or it might be well worth the attention of the antiquary

to

to bestow some pains on them for that purpose.

The village of Margam, which continues in view for some time after quitting Pyle, we found at no great distance beyond this spot. Its church, with part of the village rising in a bottom under the majestic steep of a finely wooded range of mountain, forms at once a picture of rural beauty, pleasing, simple, and secluded, as we ascend the higher ground above Court-y-Davydd.

Leaving the village a few score paces to the left, a plain carriage road conducts to the gate of the park and gardens, in the midst of which the new conservatory rises in a conspicuous manner to observation. We soon learnt that the care of Margam is now consigned into the hands of an attentive gardener, who is allowed to admit strangers of respectable appearance, and most commonly accompanies them through the walks. The

space of ground allotted to these gardens are of pretty considerable extent, and the situation is altogether peculiar. They lie at the foot of the *Mynydd Mawr*, the stupendous eminence that soars abruptly to a great height above the village, and exhibits a fine display of timber trees from the base to the loftiest summit.—The picturesque effect of this sylvan scene, as others have before remarked with much propriety, suffers materially from the shorn appearance of the trees which clothe the upper part of the mountains; for these seem rather to betray the neat formality of art produced with the shears, than the sportive features of nature, which, when uncontrolled, are ever easy, wild, and graceful.—From their lofty position, those trees are constantly exposed to the boisterous violence of the winds that blow across the Severn sea, and assume, of course, much less of that luxuriancy of growth, and foliage, which is perceptible in those which flourish upon the lower declivities, or sheltered places in the plan-

plantation below. But even so, the effect is good, and the eye of taste reposes on it with infinitely more delight than if it were despoiled of those sylvan honours, and its barren sides left naked and exposed.

The scenic beauty of this spot is not the only attraction to induce the stranger to visit Margam. The old mansion of the family of the Mansels, who resided here for many years, has been demolished of late; but the walls of the park and gardens still enclose the remains of the ancient abbey of Margam, with the ruins of an elegant chapter-house. Its orangery is reputed to stand unrivalled. The gardens are pretty, and there is also an admirable, though small collection of antique statues, vases, sepulchral monuments, and other curiosities preserved here, for which the place is indebted solely to the present proprietor, Thomas Mansel Talbot, Esq. who resides at Penrise castle, on another of his estates, in the promontory of Gower.

The

The ruins upon this spot afford an impressive example of the unsparing vengeance of time, which sooner or later levels with the dust the proudest effort of human labour. Little of those ruins are now extant, but there is enough to excite a lively interest in the contemplative mind. The chapter-house survived the downfall of the other buildings for some ages, but this in its turn has at length fallen, with the exception of the outer wall.—Margam abbey, according to Tanner, was founded by Robert, earl of Gloucester, in the year 1147, for monks of the cistertian order, and dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Camden and Speed are of a different opinion, and attribute it to William, the earl of Gloucester, his son. To reconcile both authorities, some admit that it might have been began previous to the death of Robert, and finished by William after he had succeeded to that title. In the monasticon it is placed among the benedictines.

Mr. Grose is misled in believing that the parish

parish church now standing in the village was the abbey church of Margam, although from its contiguous situation it might possibly be connected with that edifice by the means of cloisters; for the foundation of a church much more magnificent, was discovered lately close to the chapter-house. Traces of buildings connected with it were observed also at the same time to extend across the gardens towards the present church, which stands at the extremity of the garden wall, and seems to favour the conjecture, that in former days there must have been a communication between the two buildings.

There is no doubt that the chapter-house, and the buildings whose ruins we trace behind it, was part of the "veri large and fair chirch" to which Leland alludes in his itinerary:—a passage hitherto misconceived as applying only to the church extant at the present time.

Those foundations were discovered by accident

dent under a prodigious mound of earth, where they had lain concealed from a time immemorial. Among the curious relics found here, were three ancient tomb-stones, on two of which were the figure of a cross with a sword on one side. The third is similar, except only that the lateral device represents a key instead of sword. Near the spot we first enter, the remains of the foundations of several noble columns are perceptible. Close to these we saw a triangular flight of steps, which, facing a large window to the east, it is presumed, conducted to the altar; and the fractured traces of a spacious slab, with its mutilated supports, are shewn in confirmation of this idea. An elegant fluted vessel for containing the holy water was found among the rubbish, and restored to an angular recess formed by the two walls near this supposed altar.—A considerable portion of the tessellated pavement of the original building, as it evidently appears, was found under the ruins of two other pavements in the course of digging: the

labourers

labourers dug still lower than this, but they only met with a number of human bones, which proved sufficiently they had sunk to the foundation. This pavement was composed of highly glazed earthen tiles, about five or six inches square, some of which were of a beautiful green colour, others were yellow, and the rest white, and the whole were disposed alternately, according to their colours, to produce the most striking contrast. Part of this pavement remains still. There is an air of neatness about those ruins that is by no means common, the profusion of *Valeriana rubra*, the *anterrinum album*, and other plants, which spontaneously decorate their mouldering walls, producing a very agreeable effect.

The interior of the chapter-house gave birth to impressions of another cast. We tread its ruins with regret, because its downfall might have been long averted, and lament the loss which genuine taste must feel in the destruction of such a classic structure. The

building

building within the area is circular, but the walls on the outside are slightly angulated. Its diameter is fifty feet. To borrow the language of an accurate writer who saw this edifice complete:—"The purest gothic prevailed throughout."—"The just proportion of the windows, and delicate ribs of the arches, which all rise from the center column and walls, gradually diverging from their respective points above, must please the eye of every spectator; and, what is uncommon in light gothic edifices, the external elevation is as simple and uniform as the internal perspective, there being no projecting buttresses to disturb or obstruct its beauty."—"The preservation of this building," continues this observer, "led me to conclude, that much attention must have been given to the lead which originally covered it; but to my astonishment I heard, that the lead had been long since removed, and that the only security of the roof against the weather was a thick oiled paper, which by no means prevented the

rains

rains from penetrating and filtering through the stone work; but such is the solidity of the arch, that as yet it has suffered no detriment *."—Thus unprotected, this beautiful edifice survived the inclemencies of every season for the space of many succeeding years, till the severe frosts of 1799 effected its destruction. The fine vaulted roof, the arches, and the central pillar that supported them, fell together at one crash, and the broken fragments now lie confounded in undistinguished ruin amidst the nettles and briars that flourish within its walls.—The design may be still perceived. There were formerly nine windows, and a principal door way, besides a small lateral entrance on each side of it. The pilasters of the columns against the wall, (twelve in number,) remain, and among the rubbish we saw the foliated capital of the central pillar, with several fragments of its angulated column †.

* Wyndham, Grose.

† Before we paid a third visit to Margam last year, most of these stones had been removed for building purposes.

We

We next entered the conservatory: this building, which has been recently built for the reception of the noble orangery for which this place is celebrated, is one of the largest of its kind in the country. The length, as we were told by the gardener, is three hundred and twenty-seven feet by seventy-five feet in breadth. We saw it under every disadvantage, for it was perfectly empty; the trees, which are strong and luxuriant, being allowed to ornament the open grounds during the warmer months of summer.—There is at each extremity of this extensive building, a small apartment, one designed for a library, and the other for a museum. In the latter are deposited the assemblage of curiosities collected by Mr. Talbot during his long residence in Italy. These consist chiefly of a few very valuable relics of ancient statuary. The voice of fame speak highly of their merit; and certainly not without reason. One in particular, the statue of a fawn with a fistula in his hand, upon which he appears to have been playing

a moment

a moment before, is an undoubted antique, and in point of execution may rank amongst the first rate productions of the art. A bust of Pallas in Parian marble, is admirable. Several of the smaller figures are entitled also to considerable commendation. Among the rest are two or three statues of distinguished orators; an effeminate figure of Alexander the Great; a modern bust of pope Galgalini, and two fine Roman monuments of the sepulchral kind. Most of the antique statues were discovered in a mutilated state, and although one or two rather whimsical mistakes have been committed in attempting to restore the defects, it must be allowed they rarely disgrace the original in point of workmanship.

A vase of the purest white marble, beautifully adorned with allegoric figures in high relievo, stands in one of the apartments. This we learnt to be a copy from a celebrated antique piece of sculpture. The artist has chosen the subject of a bacchanalian feast for the

display of abilities, in which he has succeeded to admiration. Amidst the group we see the sottish sire of Bacchus, surrounded by female bacchanantes, who are revelling in the utmost extravagance of drunkenness. None of the figures are above fifteen inches in height, notwithstanding which, they seem to possess every grace of attitude, symmetry, and beauty, that can possibly be expressed through the transparent flowing drapery that invests them.—Near this we were shewn a fine vase of Egyptian porphyry; and also two others of a smaller size, upon which the elements and seasons are emblematically depicted.

The models of ancient buildings in cork and pumice, are extremely curious, although few in number. The triumphal arch of Titus: the temple at Tivoli; and another, the stupendous amphitheatre of Vespasian, upon a large scale, are allowed to be executed in a masterly style of perfection.

We passed through the grove of orange trees

trees in our walk across the pleasure grounds. The greater number of those trees are ten or twelve feet high, healthy, vigorous, luxuriant, and laden with flowers, and fruit. They were disposed, as usual, round a small piece of water in tubs, and diffused a fragrance the most grateful imaginable. This choice collection was at first intended to grace the princely gardens of Elizabeth, queen of England, being sent with that view as a present by Philip, king of Spain, to this country; but the vessel in which they were conveyed hither, being wrecked upon the coast of the Margam estate, they became the property of one of the Mansel family, as lord of the manor, and since that time have been carefully preserved upon this spot.—The gardener escorted us a few steps further across the grounds, and then committed us to the care of the parish clerk, who was in waiting at a door to conduct us into the adjacent church: that, which Mr. Grose denominates the abbey church, and the conventual church of the abbey of Margam.

The western front of this building is greatly admired for the neat example it exhibits of an uncommon style of Norman architecture, all the arches being circular, the pillars slender, prettily filletted, and ornamented with capitals of a curious character.

At the east end of the church is a small chapel containing various monuments of the Mansels. The north wall is engrossed by a gigantic mural monument of white marble, whose spacious compartments were once filled with records of the former owners of this estate, but of which only a small part remains distinctly visible at this period. To trace the remainder would have cost more trouble than we were at this time inclined to bestow on it, because upon the whole we conceived it more likely to afford information to the biographer, than amusement to the casual tourist. —Within the southern inclosure of the chapel, a part separated from the rest by means of iron rails, the more costly monuments however

ever are preserved. These are all of the altar kind, large and lofty, with whole length recumbent figures of the persons to whose memory they are erected. They are elaborately carved in gypsum, and are gilt and painted with the strictest regard to the costume of the times in which those persons lived. A number of little figures emboss and decorate the sides of the tomb, representing the parents, descendants and other relatives of the principal persons whose effigies lie above.

Neither of these monuments are much less than two hundred years old. Some exceed that age, and are still in good preservation, with the exception of one that sustained some damage from part of the roof falling in upon it. How long they will remain thus perfect, is very uncertain, the roof having been repaired so clumsily that the walls below are constantly embathed with moisture in wet weather, and seems to threaten a second downfall, that might occasion more serious mischief to the

monuments than they sustained before.—The first of these near the rails represents a man in armour lying between two females, which are probably intended for his first and second wife. Who they were is not exactly known, the inscription upon the small black marble tablet against the wall on which it was inserted, being now obliterated.—The second tomb bears the figures of Sir Richard Mansel, Knt. and Dame Jane his lady.—The third, bearing two figures, a male and female, is unknown, the letters on the tablet, as in the first instance, being now illegible,—and the fourth commemorates Sir Lewis Mansel and his three wives, one only of whom is represented: she lies by his side upon the slab of black marble, with a griffin's head at her feet. At the feet of Sir Lewis is the figure of an eagle.

A small square tablet of brass fastened against the wall of the south aisle, nearly facing the door at which we first entered from the

the gardens, arrested our curiosity as we proceeded from this chapel towards the nave of the church. This memorial consecrates to future ages the fame of Evan Rise, a faithful servant of the Mansels, who died at the commencement of the last century, and was buried in the grave below. The novelty of the lines engraven upon this epitaph struck us with peculiar force. Whoever might be the *poet-incognito*, for he is unknown, the frigid critic will allow, possessed at least one merit, the happy talent of combining the ludicrous and the grave, with an easy fluency of composition, in some degree peculiar to himself. The present is a whimsical effusion of the rhyming muse, which the classic reader may be pleased to peruse in the language of its writer *.

Vos qui colitis Hubertum
Inter divos jam repertum
Cornuque quod concedens fatis
Reliquit vobis insonatis

* Thus freely imitated :—

Ye votaries of gen'rous Hubert
Number'd now among the saints;
Who sound the horn, he dying left you,

The curious old cross of Margam ought not to escape remark. This we inspected after coming down from the summit of the

Latos solvite clamores
In singultus et dolores
Nam quis non tristi sonet ore
Conclamato venatore?
Aut ubi dolor justus nisi
Ad tumulum Evani Risi
Hic per abrupta, et per plana
Nec tardo pede nec spe vana
Canibus et telis egit
Omne quod in sylvis degit
Hic evolavit mane puro
Et cervis ocyor et Euro

Sigh, bewail, and moan complaints.
Who, but laments the huntsman gone,
No more to cheer the jovial band:
Or who at morn, or setting sun,
Should fail to pour their earnest grief
Upon the tomb of Evan Rise?

O'er hills and dales, with joy elate,
With footsteps swift, and hopes not vain,
Oft has he chas'd the fleeting stag,
With hounds and huntsmen in his train.
Or scour'd the woods, and thickets deep,
For all that in their mazes dwell;
Or swept the plain, or climb'd the steep,
Pusuing still the scented track
Till panting Renard died.

Mymydd,

ANCIENT BRITISH CROSS *IN* MARGAM.

ROMAN MEMORIAL,

p. 19.

London. Published as the Act directs by T. Donovan, May 1, 1805.

Mynydd Mawr, to which we had been directed, to survey the prospects towards the sea,

Venaticis intentus rebus
Tunc cum medius ardet Phœbus
Indefessus adhuc quando
Idem occidit venando
At vos venatum illo duce
Alia non surgetis luce
Nam mors mortalium venator
Qui ferina nunquam satur
Cursum proæ vertit humanum
Proh dolor! rapuit Evanum
Nec meridies nec aurora
Vobis reddent ejus ora
Restat illi nobis flenda
Nox perpetua dormienda

Full bent upon the alluring game,
Once as the morning blush'd with light,
He sallied forth, and cours'd till noon;
Then, while the mid-day sun shone bright,
And Rise unwearied was with sport,
Another hunter burst in view,
And broke his pleasure short.

—Ye shall not rise another morn
To hunt with him, your leader,
"Venison" will not content grim death!
Then mark me gentle reader,
'Twas death, who hunts the mortal race,
Who seeks the human course,
Belayed the ardent band in chase,
And seiz'd, alas, on Evan!

which

which it so pre-eminently commands *.—The cross stands in an inclined position against

Finivit multa laude motum
In ejus vita longe notum
Reliquit equos cornu canes
Tandem quiescant ejus manes
Evano Rise
Thomas Mansel
Servo fideli
Dominus benevolus,
P. ob.
1702

Not morn, nor eve, will e'er restore
This leader of your sports to life,
Wrapt in " eternal night," he sleeps
Secure, from toils, from care and strife.
When living, far and wide his name
Extended o'er the land,
And still, of rustic, honest fame,
Some store hath left behind.
So finish'd well the mortal course
Of him whom we deplore:
May praise
Attend his memory now;
And peace,
His soul for evermore.

* On the summit of Mynydd Margan, is the large block of hard stone mentioned by Camden, which the natives call *y Maen Llythyrag*, or the lettered stone. There is a prophesy respecting it, importing that whoever shall explain the inscription on it, will shortly die. " Let the reader, therefore, attempt it if he dares," says Camden, and thus proceeds himself to read it. " Bodvac (Bodoacus) hic jacet filius Catotis Irni pronepos Æternali Domo."

the

the wall of one of the village ale houses in the main street leading from the church. Its size is considerable, appearing to be about eight feet high. The head, or upper part is completely circular, with the shaft of the same piece of stone, and very short, as if broken at the bottom. This rests upon a large square stone, which no doubt served as the base originally, being ornamented with an inexpressible variety of involuted lines in the same style as those on the shaft, and circular head of the cross it supports.

Stepping across the meadows another view of Margam presents itself. The neat display of cottages, with the noble conservatory, backed by the loftier elevation of the church, with the towering wooded hill above them, appeared from hence in a still more pleasing point of view than before. It was not, therefore, without concern, that we heard from one of the villagers, of various alterations that were in contemplation, which if once carried into

into effect, would deprive this agreeble landscape of one of its most interesting features. The suggestion was, that if the classic modern front of the conservatory alone arose to view in the fore ground of the dark wooded hill, it would appear to more advantage than it possibly can while the church rises to a greater height behind it. The church it seems requires more repair than the funds of the parish can conveniently defray, and it is said the proprietor of Margam offered to expend the sum required, on condition that the venerable edifice sould be abridged of the south aile to enlarge the gardens, and be dismantled of its pinnacle, its lofty roof and aspiring front, in order to reduce it below the level of this favourite green house!—We must reasonably entertain a hope, for the credit of its liberal owner, that the report is destitute of truth, and that he would rather contribute his assistance to preserve an edifice, the pride of his predecessors, in all its beauty, than lend his aid to injure, nay, violate the building, for such a paltry motive.

A narrow

A narrow road turns off to the southward from Margam, that leads in a direct course to the verge of the sandy heath, on which we met with the village of Kenfig; a cluster of mean cottages, grouped together with its church on a ridge of rising ground that overlooks the heath, and commands, on the other side, a boundless view of the channel.—At the commencement of our walk from Margam in the way thither, we passed Eggwls Nunne, an extensive tract of land that belonged to the church before the dissolution, as the name implies. About three quarters of a mile upon this road, we also saw the small stone pillar which Camden describes as standing here in his days. This serves as a kind of land-mark, occupying a spot upon the bank on the left hand side of the road, in a direction due south from the village we were leaving. It is a quadrangular column, above four feet high, and more than one in breadth on each side. The two words *Punpeius Carantorius*, cut in rude roman letters on one of the sides of this stone,

stone, may be still distinctly read. Antiquaries admit this to be the monument of a Roman. The Welsh are of a different opinion. Camden tells us, that by adding and altering, they read the inscription thus: *Pim bis an car antopius, god.* and explains it in the following manner. "The five fingers of our friends, or neighbours slew us," believing it to be the sepulchre of Morgan the prince, from whom the county took its name, and who they say was slain eight hundred years before Christ.—The lands, as we sauntered on, appeared to be in good condition, with many respectable farm houses sprinkled over it, till the road bends towards the sandy heath that separates these lands from Kenfig, and there at once every trace of culture and society appeared to have forsaken us. The distant tower of the church defined the spot which Kenfig occupies, and with the assistance of a friendly cart track, directed our footsteps with some little certainty the best way towards it.

But

But before we reached the place, we were overtaken by the honest fellow that had shewn us the church of Margam, who perceiving from our enquiries we were strangers, and apprehending we might encounter some difficulty in finding the old castle and pool of Kenfig, which he knew to be the object of our journey when we parted with him, had put up his lime truck, with which we left him at work for the day: and without waiting for saddle or bridle, save a lime sack and a halter, had mounted his poney, and set off at full gallop after us.

On the event of this meeting, we had reason to congratulate ourselves soon after; Kynfig to our astonishment as we perceived in the sequel of the day's adventure, harbours a desperate banditti of lurking fellows, who obtain a very profitable livelihood by the illicit triffic carried on upon this coast in the smuggling line, the plunder of wrecks, and the like, and whose haunts of course it behoves

behoves the stranger to avoid, or visit with caution. We did not escape the threats of these brutal pilferers, for daring as they conceived to pry into their concerns, and if we had not been under the watchful eye of one who knew them, and would certainly have led to their detection, we have every reason to believe that consequences of a much more serious nature must have ensued.

A neat modern monument enclosed within a rail-work of iron, stand n the burying ground near the west end of the church, deserving of attention. On the south side we observed a large coffin-like stone, embellished with an elegant flowery cross. It is of the earliest Norman age, and very similar in appearance to that of Morice de Lundres in Ewenny priory. We were prevented from taking a drawing of this by the boisterous intrusion of a party of fellows, who after abusing us in the village, had followed us to the church. The sight of the pencil and memorandum book, furnished a sufficient

sufficient pretext for their interruption. "Yes, certainly they are spies," exclaimed one of them, the rest rejoining that he must be right. Here our conductor, who had hitherto observed uncommon silence, with a mixture of surprize and resolution addressed himself to them in their native tongue, and finding his expostulations ineffectual, whispered softly in my ear, "be cautious,"—"they are dangerous men."—"They are not so ignorant (continued this man very generously) as to suppose you are spies, because you are examining an old tomb-stone, but they are wicked enough for any thing, and I must say, though they are my own country-folks, under the pretence of securing you for spies, they might first plunder you, and then perhaps murder you to prevent discovery."—According to his advice, we left the place immediately: a volley of menace accompanying us, as we crossed the sand banks, but these we disregarded, perceiving that none of the people were inclined to follow us, and taking a circuitous route

across the sands, soon came in sight of the lake of Kenfig.

This pool of water being esteemed a singular geological curiosity, deserves particular mention. We were ourselves at the first glance surprised to find such a body of fresh water in this situation. The water is embosomed in a depression of an irregular form, in the midst of sands that have been apparently drifted upon this spot from the contiguous coast, and though lying within a very short distance of the sea at flood tide, invariably retains its freshness pure and untainted by the muriatic properties of the former. The circumference of this pool is estimated at a mile and three quarters. The depth is great in some places. Indeed it has the reputation of being in many parts unfathomable, or in other words, after many trials the greater depths have not yet been ascertained.

The story of the country is, that in former times,

times, beyond the reach of history, a town or city standing in this very spot, was swallowed up in the night time by an earthquake. In the morning, the people say the town had entirely disappeared, and nothing was to be seen in the place of it but this pool of water; which, rushing from secret springs in the bowels of the earth, had completely filled the cavity the shock occasioned.—Similar stories are related of some other lakes and pools in Wales, with what degree of truth is here unnecessary to enquire. There is nothing absurd in admitting the possibility of the fact, so far as relates to this individual spot. But we are inclined to think the tale arose from another circumstance much more plausible, and better authenticated. The pen of history records the destruction of the old town of Kenfig, that was standing in the time of the Clares, soon after the conquest, by the dreadful ravages of the sands driven from the shore of the Severn sea. The town in a little time was completely overwhelmed, and the inhabitants being com-

pelled

pelled to desert it, in order to preserve themselves secure from a repetition of the same calamity, built another town upon the lofty ridge of land on which the village bearing that name remains at this day. Those circumstances tend to confirm the notion entertained by some, that the old town actually occupied a station near this pool, which being inundated with sands at the same time as the lands surrounding, its pent up waters would naturally be constrained to shift their position, and perchance, by overflowing its former boundaries, might eventually contribute to the dissolution of the town, and thus afford some colour of authority to the disasterous tale which tradition magnifies *.

The water of Kenfig pool is not merely fresh, but pure, crystaline, and of a pleasant

* We received the most positive assurance of some fishermen near this spot, who had been occasionally employed to take fish in this pool, that ruins of the buildings belonging to the old town are still to be seen in two or three places below the surface of the water.—The value of this local trait of information we cannot possibly appreciate, as we had no means of satisfying our minds respecting it.

flavour,

flavour, as we found on tasting it. To determine only the freshness of the water, no such precaution was requisite, because a slight attention to its spontaneous products was sufficient to prove the fact. They are such as are peculiar to fresh waters only.—Those who possess an ordinary acquaintance with the science of nature, well know with what unerring precision the great Author of the Universe has defined the sphere in which every creature is destined to fulfil the purposes of that life bestowed upon it: the element most congenial with its habits; and the means best calculated to supply its wants.—The situation most convenient for the growth of the humblest vegetable; or the station suitable to every inanimate body. —And really I scarcely ever remember to have witnessed this distribution of Providence marked more definitively than within the compass of a mile or two about this spot. The pool, the heath, the beach embathed with the tribute of the advancing waves, and the intervening track of sands, producing each

a distinct variety of living creatures, or vegetables peculiar to the various situations that occur here.—The shallows of the pool near the shore is overmantled with aquatic plants, among which the Nympha alba, displaying at this time a profusion of its lovely white blossoms, appeared most conspicuous *.

The ruin of Kenfig castle, from the obscurity of its situation, is rarely visited by strangers. It lies at a distance from this pool, upon a small eminence, surrounded by a cluster of sand hills, in the midst of a sandy plain that stretches along one side of the village.

Fancy is bewildered in contemplating the solitary remains of this ancient fortress. What has been its primitive form?—What its original extent? These are questions which advert to mind, but remain unanswered. We perceive at once that it must have risen to a far greater height above the plain than it does

* We also gathered viola lutea in plenty on the adjacent Heath.

at

at this period, because the foundations, and even the walls, lie buried under the ever shifting surface of the sands, or only just emerge above their level. Those who imagine that it belonged in the first instance to the Stradlings of St. Donat's; or to the lords of Ogmore, are alike misled; and it is equally certain that the building served a more important purpose than that of an advanced post for making observations towards the bay of Swansea *. We are not disposed to reject traditionary information on trivial grounds. The people of the country are persuaded that it was the castellated residence of Fitzhamon for some years after he overcame Glamorganshire, during which time the castle of Cardiff was rebuilding, and this tradition I am inclined to admit. Can the rational mind distrust the truth of an assertion founded on the traditional belief of the country, when that belief is confirmed by the collateral testimony of authentic history? We are expressly told by Caradoc, that the town and castle of Kenfig,

* Vide Evans's Tour.

the town of Cowbridge, or Pont Vaen, and the town and castle of Cardiff were retained by Fitzhamon as his share of the conquest. Further, it is stated by Sir Edward Stradling, Knt. the lineal descendant of the first lord of St. Donat's *, several centuries after, that "the castles of Cardiff, and Kenfig, with the three market towns of Cardiff, Kenfig, and Cowbridge, being the *body* of the lordship of Glamorgan, were reserved by the lord (Fitzhamon) for himself and his heirs." The words of Leland would seem to confirm the idea that the castle of Kenfig, together with the town, remained in the possession of Fitzhamon's descendants ages after. "Kenfig," observes the writer, "was in the Clares tyme a Borow Town, &c.;†" and Fitzhamon was indisputably the great ancestor of this branch of the Clare family. The first possessor of that name was Sir Gilbert de Clare, who married Amicia, the second daughter of William earl of Glocester. She was the fourth in descent from Fitzhamon. Her son,

* Written in 1572.

† Leland. v. 4. f. 66, 67

Sir

Sir Gilbert de Clare, so called after his father, succeeded. The Clare family retained the estate till the reign of Edward the Second, when Sir Gilbert de Clare, the ninth lord of Glamorgan, was slain by the Scots, and the estate devolved to his three sisters. The eldest, Eleanor, marrying the younger Hugh Spenser, the latter succeeded to the title*. Nothing is more plausible than the suggestion that Kenfig castle during all this time belonged to the lords of this estate. We have the authority of a petition presented by this Spenser, or his son, to Edward the Second, to prove that it appertained to the lordship in after times. This petition complains, that among others the castle of Kenfig had been plundered and burnt by the earl of Hereford, Roger Mortimer, and his nephew, who were confederated against him. The castle must have been replaced in a respectable state of defence after that time, since in the reign of Henry the Fourth we find it capable of making resistance to the victorious arms of Owen Glyndwr, by

* Caradoc. Vide Powel.

whom

whom it was taken, dismantled, and reduced to ruin.

The style of this building, so far as can be observed in the shattered remnant of a wall and a single arch-way, appears to be rather ancient. Perhaps, indeed, it may be referred with safety to the earliest æra mentioned in this history. The form of the mount on which it stands, with the traces of the walls, prove this part to have been somewhat circular, and about seventy-five feet in diameter. The aspect of this ruin, its size, and situation, and every circumstance of its history, concur to persuade us that this is nothing more than the remains of the keep, and consequently only part of a much larger building, long since dilapidated, and buried in the sands *.

So much time was spent upon the coast

* Leland speaks of it in these terms about the year 1538. "There is a litle village on the est side of *Kenfik and a Castel boothe* in Ruine, and almost shokid and devourid with the sandes that the Severn Se castith up." Vol. 4. *f.* 67.

below

below Kenfig, that night was hastily closing upon us as we drew near Taybach, which place we entered rather weary. Certain as we were that it would be inconvenient, if not impracticable, to bestow a visit on the copper works before the following morning, we designed in the way thither to rest in the town for the night. The dirty appearance of the place, and its inhabitants, as we walked up the main street, however, in a moment banished every favourable expectation we had conceived of the reception to be met with here, and but for the irresistible impulse of curiosity, had probably shaken our first resolves. Passing the smelting works we enquired for the inn to which our companion for the afternoon had directed us at parting: we found it, but it was full. This was a serious disappointment, from the anxiety of which we were relieved by the welcome intelligence that we had passed by the *best* inn of the place. To this we resorted immediately, and found it full too!—Our mortification was

increased

increased because there was no other. The hour was late, the night dark, and our only alternative seemed to be, to set out immediately for Neath, which being seven miles further, we could scarcely hope to reach before midnight. The landlord seemed anxious to administer his advice in this dilemma. Indeed, gentlemen, said he, you should not have expected lodgings in a place like this. It is only a small town of coal miners and smelters, and my house, the best and only one, for public accommodation, except that you just left, is always crowded with captains of vessels, and their mates, whose business brings them to the copper works. At the village of Aberavon, another mile on the road, are several good inns at which you may be certainly accommodated.

At Aberavon we succeeded better. We obtained admittance into what is esteemed the principal house of public entertainment in the village, with a promise of excellent beds for the night. And further still, we could perceive

perceive by the conduct of mine host of the "globe inn," that he considered us, his new visitors, of sufficient consequence to engross his sole attention. While his fair partner was assiduously engaged in providing our frugal repast for supper, he did us the honour to stand in waiting, fixing himself for this purpose against the wall, with his arms folded across, his eyes stedfastly fixed upon us, his features composed, and his whole body so perfectly motionless that he literally personated the statue of silence.—In this posture he remained so long that we began at last to suspect he intended waiting till we retired to rest. And perhaps we were not mistaken. But his presence becoming more and more necessary in the adjoining room, to settle some disturbances that prevailed there, he ventured occasionally towards the end of the evening to peep out at the door for that purpose. We were at last anxious to know the cause of it.—"Nothing material," said the landlord in answer to our enquiry, and resumed his former station. But the busy imp of discord began at length

to

to reign triumphant, the clamour was violent, the door of our apartment was broke open in a trice, and before we could be apprized of danger, we were huddled pell-mell into the vortex of men, women, and furniture that laid promiscuously sprawling upon the floor.

The occasion of this ridiculous affair we learnt afterwards. It appeared that the blacksmith of the village, and a few of his pot companions, had assembled in the evening to enjoy the pleasure of social harmony over their mugs of *Cwrrw*, when some unlucky word escaped from one of the party. Blows ensued, and in a moment the mugs, the candlesticks, and stools, flew about the room with the velocity of lightning. At the instigation of the landlord, peace was once more restored among the combatants, and the wonted hilarity prevailed again, when the uproar suddenly recommencing, the delinquent was hurled by main force into the street; but he was a powerful man, and his struggles were attended with all the disorder

in

in which we had been involved.—Such are too commonly the effects of indulging in this favourite beverage among the lower orders of society in Wales, as well as the contaminated regions of the metropolis.—The sequel was more remarkable. The poor blacksmith enraged, and burning with fury for the insult, after many a strenuous effort to burst through the barricadoed door-way, but in vain, gave vent to his fury in poetic ire, in a style so truly characteristic of an ancient Briton, as could not fail to afford us some diversion. For one whole hour at least, at midnight, he loitered at the door, modulating his hoarse throat to the tunes of certain Welsh airs, to which he adapted the words, extempore, for the occasion, in his native tongue*; reflecting on the disgraceful conduct he had just experienced, and soliciting to be re-admitted, or vowing vengeance against his unfeeling comrades, if they persisted to refuse him entrance.

* Extempore verses of this description the Cambrians call *Pennilliaç*, from *Pennill*, the regular stanzas of poetical composition.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Taybach copper works.—Process of smelting, refining, and working the copper into bars and plates.—Productive collieries.—Hills above Taybach rich in iron ore.—Fossil remains of the phytolithi, *or antediluvian plants, discovered in the coal slate of this vicinity.—Aberavon.—Prospect of Britton ferry.—Track across the bay to Swansea.—Knoll or Gnoll, the scite of a Roman fortress.—Cascade of the Cledaugh at Melin Court.—Neath, the* Nidum *of the ancients.—Stone coal; its useful properties.—Manufactories about Neath.—Ruin of the castle of Neath.—Historical traits of Neath abbey:—fate of the unfortunate Edward the Third, who retreated to its sanctuary.—Present state of the abbey ruins.—Morris town.—Approach to Swansea.*

OUR walk back to Taybach, the village that engrossed attention in the way to Aberavon

ravon on the former evening, proved the source of much amusement in the morning. This place is indebted to the productive coal works that lie in the hilly range of land to the northward, for that degree of consequence to which it has lately risen. The population appears considerable, and nearly all the inhabitants have some employment either in the coal mines, or the smelting works carried on here.—The latter we were desirous of inspecting. Some time, however, elapsed after we reached the place, before our curiosity could be gratified, no strangers being allowed to enter them without leave of the proprietors, or of Mr. Jones their agent, who has a house upon the spot, and happened at this time to be from home. Upon his return we were politely favoured with his permission, and proceeded in consequence to survey works under the direction of a person appointed to attend us.

Those works are conducted upon a large

scale. There are many proprietors in the firm, among whom the Bristol company possesses a considerable, if not the greatest share. The ore is brought up the Severn sea in small coasting vessels, and landed on the quay contiguous to the works, in a proper state for either the operation of roasting, or for smelting. For this purpose the ore, as it is dug from the mine, has been previously broken into small pieces by the hand with hammers, and afterwards cleansed in the stamping mill as much as possible from all the extraneous matter to which it may be attached. In this latter process it is reduced so fine, that the whole may be easily riddled through a sieve whose meshes are not above half an inch asunder, or even closer. The ore is roasted in kilns adapted to the purpose with a slow heat, for the space of several weeks, or from three to four, or six months, according to the nature of the ore; by which means the arsenic and sulphur, with which the metal is most intimately united, is in a great measure expelled;

and

and it is then submitted to the smelting furnace more than once, to bring it to a proper state of purity.

No copper has heretofore been detected in the neighbourhood, neither are there any indications of the presence of that metal in this part of the country. The copper smelted here is brought from Cornwall, Ireland, and Scotland. The complexion of the several ores produced in the different mines from whence they are supplied, is so very dissimilar, arising from the various combinations of the metal with the sulphuric acid, the arseniate of iron, and other impurities, that the workmen, at the first sight, distinguish by that means the mine from which any particular sort is received. The ziment copper, or precipitate obtained by the decomposition of iron in the vitriolated waters of the irish copper mines, and those of Anglesea, laid here in plenty. That from Cornwall is very different, being chiefly the *yellow sulphuret*; and native copper of an arborescent form, interspersed, but

sparingly, with green and blue malachite. This is mentioned more particularly, because a proportion of those different ores are usually mixed and smelted together, experience having taught the smelter, that by a judicious intermixture of those ores, the fusion of the poorer and more refractory kinds, is more easily accomplished, than if they were put into the furnace separately.

The interior of the smelting works afford at times a curious spectacle. To the stranger who may happen to visit them when the workmen are completely engaged in their respective avocations, as they were this morning, the whole must appear extraordinary. Two of the smelting furnaces we saw charged with ore and fuel, and the temporary trough of another finished to receive the metal that had been kept some hours in a state of fusion in the furnace adjoining to it. The latter being ready for *tapping*, we waited for a short space of time to observe this process. The workman,

workman, by the assistance of a rod of iron, unfastens a lateral opening in the furnace on this occasion, which suffers the fiery torrent of liquid metal to escape from the glowing receptacle into the bed of clay prepared for its reception below. Imagination can scarcely conceive a sight more truly brilliant than the appearance of this stream of fire as it issues from the furnace. But to see this to advantage the works should be attended in the night time, when the darkness must greatly favour the sublimity of the scene. When the copper is completely in a state of fusion, it emulates the lustre of the emerald, burning with uncommon splendour, of a pale greenish colour, varied with prismatic exhalations that rise and float upon its agitated surface. As the heat subsides the mass becomes red, like heated iron, after which it assumes, very gradually, a darker hue, and when cold it is nearly black.

The furnaces are built with fire bricks of a

particular kind, that are manufactured on the spot. The material for them is a sort of magnesian clay, which forms a stratum immediately under the lowest vein of the coal in the neighbouring hills. It is brought down for this purpose to the works, where it is ground in a mill, and then worked into shape in the same manner as clay in common. Before the utility of this substance was discovered, fire bricks in many smelting works were made at a great expense of other materials. But this clay has been found of late years to answer every purpose. It is equally capable of resisting, for a time, the powerful action of the intense fires necessary to reduce the most stubborn ore to a state of fusion, and being easily obtained, is much cheaper. This clay, which the miners call *clunch*, accompanies the coal, forming a stratum under the lowest vein in the mine; it is of a grey colour, with a foliated texture, greasy to the touch, and becomes of a pale flesh colour when burnt.

An amazing quantity of coal is consumed in

in those works, but it is amply supplied from the coal pits in the hill above Taybach, from whence it is brought down along the rail roads constructed for the purpose, in the company's dram waggon. The person who attended us observed, that the hilly tract contiguous to the coal mines abounds with a good ore of iron, (which is presumed to be of the argillaceous kind) and were is not for the present concerns producing much greater emolument than could be derived from the smelting of this less valuable metal, might possibly engage the attention of the company.

In seeking for a vein of coal between this place and Britton ferry, some years ago, the miners discovered a bed of extraneous fossils in a stratum of blackish slate, lying immediately above the coal. These were of the vegetable kind, the remains of plants apparently unknown to botanists in a recent state *.

* Mr. Strange speaks of the impressions of fossil plants found in the coal pits about Britton ferry, four miles to the westward of this

The miners having descended very far below this slaty stratum in the coal works above Taybach, it is only by accident that any specimens of those curious fossils are to be met with now. I learnt on enquiry that impressions of plants in this state are sometimes observed here, but very rarely.

After attending to the business of smelting and refining the metal, we gladly left the smelting works, whose heat is intolerable to be borne for any considerable length of time by those unaccustomed to it, and followed our conductor to another part of the works.

In one place we were shewn the stupendous

place, most likely in the course of the same vein of coal. In the Archæologia, where several of these are figured, this writer observes, that those plants are *felices* of the exotic kind, with others still more curious. One of singular character, having verticillated fasculi of leaves surrounding the main stem, he considers as a petrified daisy, but from perfect specimens of this singular fossil in my possession, it is evident this must be a mistake. Neither is Mr. Strange correct, I believe, in stating further, that the impressions of ferns discovered here, can be referred with certainty to any of the exotic felices at this time known. They are clearly of vegetable origin, and must have been deposited here at the period of the deluge, or in some other vast commotion the earth has undergone.

machinery

machinery of a steam engine, erected very lately on a new principle: an improved piece of mechanism, to which some additional powers are attached, that differed from any thing of the kind we had seen elsewhere. These were designed to facilitate the work carried on below. By means of these, the pigs of copper, as they are brought from the fineries, are wrought into bars, plates, and hollow vessels of any given size, with a degree of regularity and dispatch that must astonish those not well acquainted with the principles on which such a grand and complicated piece of machinery may be brought into action.

This steam engine is of an uncommon size. It occupies a lofty lateral building, connected with the apartment in which the machinery is kept in motion by its force. The boilers, as usual, rest in the lower part of the premises, above which the tubes ascend through the second to the third story, in the latter of which the lever is suspended. This lever

lever consists of a solid piece of timber of great magnitude, strengthened with girths of iron; and is put in motion at pleasure by opening the valves, and allowing the current of the steam to act upon the piston bar attached to one extremity. This communicates the power of action to the whole machinery, a kind of chain work being suspended from the other extremity of the lever to the axis of the large double wheel in the room beneath, through the aid of which all the smaller ones perform their office.

While the lever was at work we descended to observe its effects upon the great wheel connected with this chain, which we found performing its revolutions with a slow progressive pace, at the same time that it conveyed a brisker motion to those of a smaller size, and to the cylinders of the flatting mills. An apparatus attached to one side of the great wheel is contrived to raise, and let fall alternately, a prodigious heavy hammer, under which

which an anvil is placed for the reception of the piece of copper that is to be beaten into form. During our stay, a fiery mass of copper, trailed from an adjacent furnace, of two hundred and fifty pounds weight, was reduced at a few blows to a fourth part of its original thickness. But this we were led to consider as a trifle compared with the powers it might be made to exert, when we were shewn the bottoms of half a dozen copper cauldrons that had been hammered into form by means of this machine, each of which consisted of a single mass of metal, the smallest weighing a thousand pounds, and the largest from fifteen, to twenty hundred weight a piece.—Another mass of ignited copper was dexterously placed between the forceps of a pair of shears, which shut and open alternately by the motion of a particular wheel, and at two or three strokes cut a plate of copper asunder four inches in thickness and a foot in breadth.

Before the copper is converted into plates

or

or bars, the pig of metal is made red hot, when it is closely beaten together under the hammer, and cut into pieces of the most convenient for the purpose wanted, with the shears above-mentioned. Again, those pieces are conveyed to the furnace when they become red-hot as at first. One of the pieces is carried at a time to the flatting mill, a machine not much unlike the rolling press of a copper plate printer. The two cylinders are of steel, case-hardened and secured within a frame of iron. A man stands on each side, and while the two cylinders revolve, each in a contrary direction, one of them lifts up the piece of red hot copper with a pair of tongs, and thrusts it between the cylinders, the other man on the opposite side securing it with his tongs as it passes through. This he lifts back again over the upper roller to the first man, who by the assistance of a strong screw, diminishes the distance between the two cylinders, in order to widen and compress the plate still more; when it is conveyed a second time

time between them. This screw is turned for the same reason every time before the plate passes between the cylinders, and thus by the most simple process imaginable, the plate is gradually reduced as thin and broad as the workmen may desire.

By means of a similar machine, the copper is wrought into bars instead of plates, of any form or thickness, with equal facility. For the latter purpose, the smooth surface of both the cylinders are alike indented with eight, ten, or more distinct grooves, all which differ from each other in width and depth. The series commences with the largest groove, encircling one end of the cylinder; the next in point of size succeeds, and thus they diminish gradually to the other extremity of the series, which terminates with the smallest groove. The piece of copper being heated as before to a fiery redness, the workmen force it between the first or largest groove of the adjusted cylinders, where it receives either

the

the round or angulated form of the groove from the compression of both the cylinders, as readily as wax in a common mould. Should it be necessary, the bar is conveyed in like manner progressively through the second, third, or fourth groove, or through the whole series, till it is reduced to the thickness wanted, the length being increased in proportion as the bulk diminishes.

The copper, after receiving its proper form in the flatting mills, and cooling, is of a dusky black, or iron colour, and in order to communicate to it that lively hue which is commonly understood to be the true complexion of this metal, the plate or bar is heated again for the last time in a furnace, and when red hot is plunged into a recess filled with a saline liquor, where it assumes that colour in a few moments, and being withdrawn, the copper is put aside as being finished for exportation.

Aberavon laid in our road to Britton ferry, after

after quitting the copper works. This is a poor little village, so named from its position near the entrance of the Avon, a river abounding with excellent trout. Leland speaks of it as an insignificant place in the time of Henry the Eighth.

A road diversified at intervals with extensive prospects across the lowlands, upon the borders of the Severn to the southward, conducted about four miles further to the hilly rise from whence the scenery of Britton ferry bursts at once upon the sight of the admiring traveller.

The romantic shores that skirt this portion of the bay of Swansea, are for the most part bold, precipitous, and rocky. Of minuter beauties it possesses many, but nothing of an inferior character distracts the attention in the first glimpse of this enchanting view: nothing intervenes to lessen the grandeur of the whole. The effect is improved by the deep hues

hues of waving woods that stretch along the eminencies; the brighter verdure of the meadow land, dotted with the cottages of the peasantry: and the trees that overmantle the shaggy verge of the shore, or start abruptly from the naked declivities of the rocks in artless beauty.—Such are the peculiar beauties of the scenery surrounding the wide waste of sands embayed below, and which as we passed was receiving the restless flood of the channel within its bosom.

Near the village of Britton, which this prospect includes, lord Vernon has an elegant villa in a sequestered situation. The fine plantations of timber which cover a vast extent of land around, and contribute to enrich this charming landscape, is also the property of his lordship.

There is a pleasant walk from hence across the sands at low water to the ferry over the Neath river, which flows across the bay into the

the sea, the spot deriving the name of Britton ferry from this circumstance. This route conducts by a shorter way than the main road to Swansea, and is thought preferable by some, as the offensive works upon the road beyond Neath are by that means avoided.—But as it was our intention to visit Neath before we reached Swansea, the turnpike road along *Cwm Nedh*, or the vale of Neath, presented the nearest course.—Cwm Nedh is a vale embosomed on each side by low sweeping hills of a placid character, extremely pleasant, enriched occasionally with a few trees, and deriving much additional beauty from the silvery windings of the navigable river that bends its course along the meadows in the verdant bottom below.

About two miles further, another prospect altogether different from the preceding, opens to the view. Here the boundaries of the vale are greatly enlarged beyond its former contracted limits, and a spacious tract of level

land, environed by remote hills, is seen extending itself in an oblique direction.—Upon the verge of a flat and dreary marsh, in the midst of this extensive scene, the town of Neath attracts our observation, and at the distance of less than a mile beyond it, rises the shell of its majestic ruined abbey. The marsh subjected to the eye from hence, is one extremity of Cromlyn bog, a waste extending from below Neath almost to Swansea.

Gnoll, the seat of the late Sir Herbert Mackworth, stands on the brow of a finely-wooded eminence that commands a prospect over an amazing extent of country, in which this marshy tract, with the town and abbey of Neath, and the neighbouring copper works, are comprised.—Gnoll is believed to be the scite of an old Roman station, an opinion which its advantageous position, in addition to other collateral circumstances, may induce us to admit. The late proprietor bestowed uncommon pains in beautifying this fine estate,

estate, which it is to be lamented, in consequence of disputes arising between his successors, has been much neglected for some years past.—The cascade at this place, though in a great measure artificial, is not unworthy of attention.

But the traveller should be reminded of another waterfall of far more majestic character in this part of the country: the cateract of the Cledaugh, at Melin Court, five miles higher up the vale of Neath. At this place the water passes over the verge of a dark precipitous rock, at the height of eighty feet above the spectator, producing one of the most picturesque cascades imagineable, in its descent to the bed of the stream beneath. The surrounding scenery appears in unison with the dignity of the fall; it is romantically wild, rocky, and finely overhung with trees.

The number of coal works in the adjacent grounds, sufficiently denote the mineral trea-

sures of the spot in this particular respect. Nor could we pass without observing the vast banks, or rather hills of *scoria*, thrown out from the works that stand close to the road, which prove as clearly the benefit this country must derive from those speculative concerns. The coal mines in this neighbourhood are reputed to have been the first of the kind worked in Wales. Whether this be true, or not, is difficult to decide. The date of their discovery, or the time of working them, is not mentioned: and we are perfectly well assured, that coal pits have been worked from a very distant period in other parts of the Principality *.

From

* "The digging of this cole (says a writer of the sixteenth century) is of *ancient tymes* used in Pembrokeshire, but not in such extent and skilfull sorte as now it is; for in former tyme they used not engins for lifting up of coles out of the pitt, but made their entrance slope, soe that the people carried the coles uppon their backes along stayers which they called landwayes." *Owen* MS. *Hist. of Pembroke*, A. D. 1588.—Coal was not in general use as a fuel in England much earlier than the reign of Henry the third, London being first supplied with this commodity from Newcastle about the year 1234; and not more than three centuries after, we find an author of undoubted veracity describing the coal, and manner of working the pits, both at that period

From Gnoll we hastened to Neath: a place that may be described in a few words. Neath is an ancient town of classical celebrity, standing, as many imagine, upon the scite of the *Nidum* of Antoninus. The Welsh call it Nedd, or Nedh, from whence the English may be supposed to derive the name of Neath. It is one of the eight principal market towns of Glamorganshire. The population of this place, which was considerable in former times, has rapidly encreased of late years, in consequence of the employment afforded to the labouring part of the community, in the different works established in its vicinity.

period, and in "former times." This would almost lead us to imagine, that coal was in use in Wales long before it was adopted in England. One fact in particular has been mentioned to prove that the coal was dug for fuel by the Britons at a very remote period; the head of a flint axe, an instrument in use among the Britons before those of iron were invented in this country, was found some years ago, sticking in a vein of coal in Craig-y-Parc, Monmouthshire. *Phil. Trans.* This, it is supposed, was the instrument employed in digging for the coal by the ancient Britons; who, as Mr. Pennant tells us, distinguished this fossil by the name of *Glo*, a primitive British word, in use before the arrival of Julius Cæsar in Britain.—Perhaps the first coal exported from Wales into England, might have been obtained from the pits in this neighbourhood, but even this in my mind is doubtful.

Those concerns are conducted with great spirit. Last summer they seemed to labour under a temporary check from the continuance of the war, but the shock was much more severely felt at the commencement of hostilities. The works are now by degrees reviving, with the exception of one or two that has ceased entirely; and a principal copper work that was lately removed from hence to Lanelly, fifteen miles west of Swansea. After all, however, the inexhaustible collieries by which the town of Neath is surrounded, in addition to its commodious situation on the banks of a navigable river, must ever render it a place of extensive business in the coal and foundery line. Some conception may be formed of the local advantages of this spot, from one particular of information we received here. Notwithstanding the immense quantity of this valuable article consumed daily in the works, and the demand for exportation, coal of the best quality is sold to the inhabitants at the pits in *strikes*, a measure peculiar to

to those parts, at about the average price of three half-pence or two-pence per bushel.

Stone coal abounds, and may be obtained in any quantity along this part of the country. Hitherto the value of this commodity has been too much disregarded. As a fuel it burns with a slow yet gradual heat, emitting very little smoke, and if blown like other coal, the fire immediately expires. Towards the close of the last century, this stubborn material has been employed by several persons in lieu of coaked coal for drying malt, with every degree of success; it has been found to answer equally well for the purpose, at the same time that it is far more œconomical in point of expence. We are inclined to think, that other important advantages are still to be derived from the use of this kind of coal. Mr. Edward Martin, of Morristown, near Swansea, is so far convinced that pig and cast iron may be drawn from the ore with this raw material, that he obtained a patent for carrying

ing his scheme into practise the beginning of this summer *.

The copper manufactured at Neath is imported in a crude state from the same mine as that at Taybach, as nearly as we could learn. Close to the bridge we noticed a party of labourers lading their dram waggons with masses of grey, and reddish argillaceous iron ore, that lay in heaps along the shores, in order to convey it from the landing place along the rail road to the works near the abbey.—This ore is the product of most part of the southern coast of Wales.

* 1804.—In an old MS. Hist. of Pembrokeshire, written by G. Owen, Esq. in the year 1588, we have an accurate account of this coal. "It is called (says the writer) stone cole, for the hardnes thereof, and is burned in chimneies and grates of iron; and being once kindled giveth a greater heate than light, and deliteth to burne in darke places: it serveth alsoe for smithes to worke with, though not so well as the other kind of cole, for that, when it first kindleth, it melteth, and runneth like wax, and groweth into one clodd; whereas this stone cole burneth a parte, and never clyngeth together. This kind of cole is not noysome for the smoke, nor nothing so lothsome for the smell as ring cole is, whose smoke annoyeth all things near it."—"But this stone cole yieldeth in a manner noe smoke after it is kindled, and is so pure that fine cambrick or lawne is usually dried by it without any staine or blemish, *and is a most proved good dryer of mault, therein passing wood, fern, or straw.* Harl. MS.

The

The poor remains of Neath castle, an ancient fortress built by Richard de Greenfield for the defence of the place in the reign of William Rufus, stands in part concealed by the houses on one side of the town. The area within the castle walls, appears overgrown with trees, in the midst of which arises to a vast height, a solitary fragment of one of the old walls, which being perfectly detached from the rest of the ruin, assumes a singular appearance. There is no impediment to preclude the curious from inspecting the shell of the western front of the building. This displays two formidable rounded towers, and between them a noble gateway, the arch of which is pointed. This was no doubt a part of the original Norman structure. The accompaniments are no way pleasing, being nothing more than a cluster of mean dirty cottages, but a rich drapery of ivy overmantles the broken battlements, to enhance the beauty of the mouldering ruin itself.

Few

Few particulars of the military history of this castle remain on record. The founder caused it to be garrisoned with English and Norman soldiers, who appear to have remained in quiet possession of the place for years after his death. Nevertheless, we are not to suppose that it could be exempt from the vicissitudes of misfortune, when the Welsh princes on several occasions opposed with so much success the authority of the English, and nearly expelled them from Glamorganshire. While Henry the Second reigned king of England, this castle was wrested from the English by the victorious Llewelyn, prince of Wales, who plundered and destroyed the castle, after putting the garrison to the sword. This dreadful affray took place, according to the Welsh chronicles, in the year 1231. The castle was again taken, and burnt by the combined forces of the earl of Hereford, Roger Mortimer and his nephew, in the time of Edward the Second, at which period it formed an inconsiderable portion of the princely

NEATH ABBEY.

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princely domains of the powerful baron, Hugh le Despenser. This was the castle of the borough and manor of Neath, formerly a lordship marcher, and certain privileges are yet enjoyed by the lord of the castle, in pursuance of this delegated authority.

Neath was indebted to the devotion of Richard de Greenfield, the founder of this hostile building, for another structure of far greater celebrity:—the abbey church.

The ruins of this edifice we inspected after leaving the castle. Upon a near approach the shattered remnants of this abbey does not completely accord with the venerable aspect it assumes in the remoter view.—They fail to excite that interest, that pensive musing of the mind, which buildings far less important will sometimes inspire. We contemplate the remains of such religious structures, fallen to decay through the avarice, the neglect, or the impiety of ages past, and now mouldering to the

the dust, with infinitely greater veneration when the surrounding objects are in unison with the peaceful melancholy of the time-worn ruin we are pausing over; and the heart is allowed to enjoy, in undisturbed tranquility, the emotions they inspire.—The favourite haunts of contemplation are silent, solemn, remote from intrusion; but neither silence, nor solemnity, have a local habitation here:—the spot in which it stands is contiguous to the copper works and collieries, and the ruin is itself become the abode of wretchedness: a receptacle for the miserable families of the poorer workmen employed in those concerns.

Before this edifice fell into decay, it was esteemed the finest monastic pile of building in the Principality. Leland, who visited this place about the time of the dissolution, calls it the "fairest abbey in Wales," and the testimony of the antiquary is certainly worthy of our credit: his evidence is confirmed by the appearance of the ruin which still retains

abundant

proof of the former magnitude and grandeur of the building. The founder, as the page of history asserts, upon receiving the lordship of Neath for his services from Fitzhamon, appropriated the greater part of the revenues arising from it, to the building and future maintenance of this abbey; and after vesting it with the monks of the cistertian order, returned to spend the remainder of his life at his castle and manor of Bydford in Devonshire. There was a chapel within the castle, the revenues of which it is rather supposed, however, were alone appointed for the support of this abbey, after the expences of the building itself was defrayed out of the income arising from the lordship of Neath.

To the unfortunate Edward the Second, this abbey afforded a temporary asylum after his unsuccessful attempt to escape by sea from his cruel queen Isabella, and the barons confederated with her against him. The ship in which he embarked, after being exposed to the

the fury of a storm, was at length driven by the perversity of the winds upon the coast near Swansea. From the perils of shipwreck he escaped with difficulty. He next retreated to Neath, where some believe he was concealed with his faithful followers for a time in this abbey. Drayton tells us, he obtained admittance into the castle of Neath, which was then a strong fortress, and within the privilege of the abbey sanctuary, but that the town being threatened with a siege by his enemies, the king was obliged to leave it.—The castle of Lantriesant still held out for him, and had he reached that place, he might have remained secure till fortune proved more propitious to his welfare. But he was unfortunately betrayed; the monk upon whom the incautious monarch had relied to conduct him thither in disguise, delivering him into the hands of his implacable enemies. The last sad vengeance his unhappy destiny had reserved for him, is well known. He was immediately conveyed to Berkley castle, where the

the murderous hands of the assassins shortly after put a final period to those misfortunes which had unrelentingly pursued him through the course of his eventful life.

This is the only memorable circumstance connected with the history of the abbey. At the dissolution it shared the common fate of other religious institutions; was deprived of its estates, became neglected, and since that period has been suffered to fall into ruin.

The abbey belongs at this time to lord Dinevawr, who from the best of motives permits its forlorn inhabitants to reside within its walls, in any part that can possibly be converted into a dwelling. But from the ruinous state of the building, it is rather to be hoped for, than trusted, that this humane indulgence may not terminate in some heavy misfortune. Many vaulted apartments of large dimensions, are shewn within. One, the dining room (as it is called) of the nuns, occa-

occasionally answers the purpose of a chapel for itinerant lecturers of the methodistical persusion, whose proselytes are numerous in this country. Another called the kitchen, has a remarkable large fire-place. As to the dungeon for the confinement of disobedient nuns, mentioned by tourists, nothing certain is known; a man lately living, when a boy, remembers being carried down upon a man's shoulders, and seeing this dungeon, which could never afterwards be discovered. Some of the window frames retain examples of the elegant ornamental carved-work in stone, with which they were formerly embellished. Among the rubbish within the ruins, we observed also fragments of the glazed earthen tiles with which the church was paved in former times: these are exactly similar to those found in Ewenny priory.

For two or three miles on the road beyond Neath, the face of the country wears a more pleasant aspect than in the immediate vicinity of

FRAGMENT of ELEGANT PAVEMENT

from NEATH ABBEY

and a specimen of another in MARGAM ABBEY *Vol. 2. p. 43.*

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of the town. Still, as we proceed, the smoke of furnaces distributed over the distances at intervals, remind us of the mineral riches of this tract. Agriculture is not neglected, and the collier, the smelter, and the husbandman, seem to follow their respective concerns without material interruption to each other.

A more beautiful display of landscape than opened on the view as we rode towards Morristown, had not intervened for some miles; at least it so appeared, illuminated as it was at this time with the resplendent glories of the setting sun. A bold obtrusive hill lay directly before us, half concealed in shadow, chequered with clouds of whitened smoke arising from the furnaces below, and studded with cottages, some of which were perfectly visible, while the rest were half enveloped in obscurity. But the most striking feature appeared upon the summit of the hill, an elegant villa surrounded by trees, behind which the sun was gradually descending in solemn

majesty, which gave at once a glorious finish to the prospect.

Morristown owes its origin to the care of Mr. Morris, a gentleman who has possessed a considerable share in the mining speculations of the neighbourhood for years, being built by him for the accommodation of his workmen, and called after his name.

At Morristown the road takes an angle, turning due south along the vale; the character of which is completely that of a mining country. After leaving Morristown we found the iron rail roads and artificial canal, intersecting, or running parallel with the public high road the whole way. It is by the means of these an easy communication is maintained between the collieries lying to the north of Swansea, and the numerous founderies, brass and copper works, smelting furnaces, iron forges, and other considerable manufactories carried on near the town. The canal extends in a course nearly collateral with the Tawe river from

from the town of Swansea to Hennoyadd, close to the Black Mountains of Brecknockshire, sixteen miles distant. Many rich colleries are worked by different proprietors in the course of this canal.

But to return, in the route from Morristown the admirers of the mechanic arts may find infinite amusement. There is in particular a steam engine, constructed by Messrs. Boulton and Watts, of a stupendous size, at Llandwr, erected for the purpose of draining the water from a valuable mine, as we understand, of coal, that appears to be a masterly contrivance. This machine carries off the water from the works at the rate of seventy eight thousand gallons in an hour. We are told it cost the proprietors between four and five thousand pounds.

The immediate outskirts of Swansea presents a busy picture of trade and manufacture, while the harbour of the Tawe, crowded

with shipping, at once evinces the advantages this town enjoys from a more widely extended commerce, than falls to the share of any other sea port on this coast of Wales.

CHAP. XII.

Swansea.—Scenery of the bay by moonlight.—Castle erected by the earl of Warwick in the twelfth century: siege by Gryffydh ap Rhys, prince of South Wales:—Opinions on the style of building:—Its modern purposes.—Prospects from the tower.—Market:—fish, Sewen, Basse, &c.—Attractions to strangers.—Commerce of the town.—Commodious harbour, shipping, &c.—Pleasant coasting voyage to the extremity of Gower.—Pedestrian excursion.—Oystermouth village.—Mumble point.—Lighthouse.—Singular natural arch of calcareous spar.—Ruins of Oystermouth castle.—Tale of a subterraneous passage.—Instance of credulity.—Expansive view from the battlements of the castle.—Disasters occasioned by the encroachments of the sea.—Cursory remarks on natural history.

NOTWITHSTANDING our late arrival in Swansea, the serenity of a delightful moonlight

evening tempted us to wander down the banks of the Tawe, for the space of an hour before we retired to rest.—This led us to the new pier head at the entrance of the harbour, and from thence along the sands towards the sea.

The bay of Swansea, to which our walk eventually directed, appeared with uncommon interest at this favourable crisis.—We saw it under peculiar advantages: at a moment when nature was more than usually indulgent, and every circumstance conspired to display its varied beauties with effect.—The moon, "smiling from her throne of clouds," enlightened the trembling surface of the deep: darkness rested upon the distant promontory of Gower; while the verdant hills that rise to the northward of the bay, were partially disclosed in light.—Amid such a scene we could not remain insensible to the charms of nature: we seated ourselves upon the sand banks that skirt the bay, and for a time enjoyed its beauties.—While we loitered on the sands, a little

a little fleet of vessels hove in sight, bearing down the channel across the silvery expanse of light that glittered in the distance. Now the blaze of the mumble light-house glowed more fiercely, and distinct; and the nearer sea as it rolled in frothy waves towards the shore, twinkled with the intermingled lustre of the moon, and the gleaming reflexion of its ruddy fires.—Nothing in short could surpass the effect of the scenery: it was fine beyond expression.

Swansea castle, or as it is called in the old Welsh chronicles, the castle of Aber-tawe, in allusion to its situation near the entrance of the Tawe river, we surveyed in the morning. This is an ancient fabric, having been erected by Henry Beaumont, earl of Warwick, who obtained a grant of the lands of Gower from William Rufus, in the year 1090. Nine years after, he defeated the sons of Caradoc ap Jestyn, deprived them of those territories in Gower which the king had granted him, and built this castle, with two or three others, for the security of his new possessions.

Those who believe this castle to have been built so late as the year 1113, misconceive a passage in Caradoc's lives of the Welch princes, recording one of the first events connected with the history of the place. In that year the castle was standing, for the young prince of south Wales, Gryffydh ap Rhys, after declaring war against the English, laid seige to this castle, but which proving to be stronger than was expected, the prince thought proper to retire after burning part of the outworks. Some imagine from the style of the building, that the walls now standing are of a much later date than the time of Henry the First, but this is probably erroneous. The parapet of the walls are certainly remarkable, being pierced with a range of open gothic arches, similar to those of the episcopal palace of St. David's, and the court of Lantphey near Tenby, both of which are allowed to be of the fourteenth century. This has induced a supposition that the castle must have been repaired, and altered to its present form, about the same period.

This

This castle forms a conspicuous feature in the appearance of the town as it occurs to view from the old road to Neath. In the town itself the building is too much encumbered by the adjacent houses to be seen to any advantage. It is still partly habitable, one portion of it being fitted up for the accommodation of the poor of the parish, and another, with recent additions, for the jail. A lofty tower remains likewise, which we ascended by means of a ruinous winding staircase, and obtained from thence a comprehensive view of the environs of Swansea.

From this elevated station the town appears considerable. The extent is estimated at a mile and a half; the streets are disposed with tolerable regularity, and many of the houses are respectable. The prison below, the market place, the town hall, and tower of the church, are distinctly seen from hence. While we remained here, the accidental circumstance of a regiment of militia passing through the town,

town, occasioned no small degree of bustle among the motley groupes of people collecting from all quarters in the streets to see them, and gave a lively appearance to the moving spectacle below us.

The remoter prospects surveyed from the pinnacle of this turret, merit more minute detail. Towards the south the sea bursts upon the view with an air of conscious dignity, rolling its translucent waters into the expansive semicircle formed by the boundaries of Swansea bay, the pale hills of Somerset, that are barely visible in the skirts of an intermediate horizon faintly circumscribe the expansive distance.—The adjacent shore, a fine assemblage of gently swelling hills of the deepest verdure, forms an unusual contrast with the arid beach below. Vernanda cottage, Sketty lodge, the Woodlands, Lilliput hall, and a number of other straggling villa's rising immediately to view, or appearing half embosomed amongst the trees that ornament those

those hills, contribute to improve the picturesque effect of this display of scenery.—The prospect to the eastward is very different. It is in a word the suburb of a great commercial sea-port, with all its permanent, and many of its casual, features. A scene in which the river Tawe, and its contiguous canal, crowded with ships, coasting vessels, and the numerous craft, employed in the coal trade, engross the chief attention. The shores are lined with docks for repairing vessels, warehouses for stores, merchandize, manufactories of many kinds, and an unceasing bustle of mariners engaged in their professional avocations. A little beyond, to the south of the river, extend the founderies, the brass and copper works, and other similar concerns. Still further to the north, are the coal works, and in the farthest distance between the hills, another range of works appear half involved in the smoke arising from their own furnaces.

An indulgence extends to every debtor confined

confined in the prison of Swansea castle, by virtue of which they have an opportunity, if their debts be small, with a little exertion, prudence, and oeconomy, to liberate themselves from the horrors of a jail. Having obtained this indulgence, which on proper representation it is in the power of the high bailiff to grant, they are allowed to expose whatever articles their slender funds may enable them to muster, for sale in the open street, on that side of the market place next to the castle. The limits of this baliwick is distinctly pointed out by a range of small stones down the high way, and within this boundary the debtors are as secure from the molestation of their creditors, as though they were confined to their dismal cells within the walls of the castle.—Can the the equanimity of justice be shewn more forcibly. Humanity, however laudable, is in itself an injurious dictate of the feeling mind when misapplied, but here the line between vice and innocence may be defined, at least to a certain extent. Here we may discrimi-

nate

nate between the conduct of those whom the habits of idleness, of intemperance, or artful fraud, has involved in difficulties, and the unfortunate:—the man whom the cold and paralyzing hand of misfortune had overtaken, in despite of the honest, the unavailing struggles of his industry.

The market of Swansea is well supplied with provisions of all kinds, although fish in particular does not appear so plentiful as the maritime position of the place would lead the stranger to conceive. Half a dozen females seated upon the panniers of their ponies, rode hastily down the market place with a supply of Sewen as we passed from the castle. These fish were conveyed in this manner from a village near Pont-ar-dulas, about ten miles to the westward, the Dulas river, which that bridge bestrides, abounding with this delicious fish during the summer; and being caught in the coracle fisheries by the peasantry, are conveyed to Swansea as the nearest place for sale.

sale. At this time Sewen was retailed at the rate of four pence halfpenny a pound, and it is seldom cheaper, though sometimes higher. A few of the Basse (*Perca labrax of Linnæus*) another excellent fish, is caught at times by the fishermen in the bay, and sold in the markets at about the same price.

Swansea offers many attractions to arrest the progress of the passing tourist for a day or two or least. This place is the residence of a number of Welsh families; and since the custom of sea bathing has become fashionable, the influx of strangers in the summer time is considerable; a circumstance that has occasioned much improvement in the town of late years. Lodging houses have been fitted up in the most eligible situations, and baths of different kinds established for their accommodation by speculative individuals. Those in ill health have also the advantage of medical advice, two physicians of eminence, Dr. Turton and another, residing constantly in the town.

There

There is a commodious bathing house in particular, built at the express desire of the corporation upon the beach, where machines are kept at the distance of an easy walk, or ride across the sands below the town, for the benefit of those who prefer bathing in the open sea, to the private baths in the town.

But there are other improvements in the condition of the town to which we should advert, those which have been accomplished for the convenience of its extensive commerce. In speaking of these, the amendments at the entrance of the Tawe are not to be forgotten. About thirteen years ago an act of parliament was obtained for the purpose of enlarging and amending this entrance into the harbour, and immediately carried into execution. The expenses of this important public work was to be defrayed by an easy tax of two pence per ton on all the ships admitted into the port. The sum thus raised must have been considerable since the tax was first levied,

levied, the number of shipping brought into the port, having gradually encreased every year since, from about one thousand, or fifteen hundred, to two thousand five hundred sail, or more.—Those vessels, besides many other articles of trade and commerce bring vast quantities of copper, tin, and iron, for the works carried on upon the eastern banks of the Tawe. Coal, stone coal, and culm, from the adjacent collieries, together with copper, brass, and spelter, wrought or prepared for use, are among the principal articles of exportation.

Swansea has long maintained a decided superiority over most other Welsh towns as a place of considerable trade. So early as the middle of the last century, we have a flattering picture of its condition in this respect, and it has been gradually improving ever since. "Swansey (says a writer of that time) is an ancient, large, well built, and remarkably neat and cleanly town, governed by a portreeve,

portreeve, under the duke of Beaufort. It is esteemed the richest, and drives the greatest trade of any in the county, particularly in coals. In this neighbourhood are several considerable works in copper, iron, and tin; and by its advantageous situation is enabled to hold an extensive and profitable correspondence with the city of Bristol *."

Little coasting excursions by sea to Oxwich, Penrise, the Worm's head, and other places on the shores of the promontory of Gower, are sometimes undertaken by parties on pleasure, from Swansea, during the finer months of summer. Boats and seamen may therefore commonly be hired for such expeditions in the town. The want of inns, and other accommodations, independent of the intolerable state of the roads, of which we were well assured, had almost, indeed, induced us to visit this unfrequented track, which we were

* Kitchen's Historical Extracts, A. D. 1754.

anxious to explore, by sea; and this would probably have been resolved upon, if those whose services by chance were offered on this occasion, had not betrayed an equal proof of extortion and incapacity, which at once determined us to proceed no further than we should find convenient on foot.—Our walk commenced from Swansea soon in the morning, at a time the most favourable for crossing the sands, the ebbing tide having left a vast extent of the bay unoccupied by its waters. We proceeded in an oblique direction, conceiving that as the tide was low, we might reach the mumble light-house by a nearer route than the curvature of the bay presented. But after a walk of three or four miles, we had the mortification to perceive the sands were impassable as we approached that point. The further we attempted to proceed, the more deeply we became involved in mire; and at length, after wading through treacherous mud banks for a time, we gladly retraced the latter part of our track, and by a circuit

a circuit much longer than was intended, reached the shore to the right of the castle of Oystermouth.

There is an air of grandeur in the aspect of this ancient fortress, but unfortunately its gloomy front is far from picturesque, while the ivied curtain that entwine and overhang its walls, assimilate too closely with the dark verdure of the eminence on which it rises, to please the eye by its contrasted hues.

The village of Oystermouth stands at the foot of the hilly range of land upon which this castle is erected.

The light-house rock is insulated from the extremity of the promontory, and is only accessible on foot at low water, and even then the ascent to it is not perfectly easy.—From a rocky eminence adjacent we surveyed the shore, along which we had intended to continue our route round Gower, and at once

perceived that the design must be abandoned: perpendicular cliffs, or precipitous craggy shores, denying much further passage along the sea coast.

This extremity of land includes a variety of rocky substances, some of which are of an amazing hardness, but intermixed with others of a nature too soft to withstand the fury of the sea, which has rent and torn them in a manner inexpressibly grotesque. In one exposed spot the substance of the rock is a brittle calcareous spar, confusedly crystallised in angulated pyramids, diaphanous, of a somewhat variable opazine colour; the fracture glassy, and as usual with spars breaking into rhombs. The strata of this spar runs in an oblique direction from the side of the eminence into the sea. This substance is not uncommon, except in such a situation; and from its colour and appearance generally, has elsewhere acquired the name of *sugar-candy spar*. Being incapable of much resistance to the

Vol.2.p.101.

MUMBLE LIGHT HOUSE.

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the action of the waves, this particular extremity of the rock is worn by its attrition into the form of a rude natural arch, through which the light-house is distinctly seen in one particular point of view.

A winding path conducts to the summit of the eminence above, the rocky side of which we found enlivened with the purple blossoms of the common heath. A small battery of four eighteen pounders is mounted upon the highest pinnacle, which completely commands this side of the channel. From this rock there is an easy descent along the hill towards the village of Oystermouth, beyond which an indirect foot-way conducts us to the castle.

Oystermouth, or Mumble Castle, for both imply the same building, belonged, from a remote period, to the lords of Gower. To which of them we are to attribute its erection, is not positively known; Henry de Newburgh, earl of Warwick, who built Swansea

castle, is the reputed founder. The ruins testify, beyond dispute, the former strength of this edifice; though time, and accident, have conspired to impair it, and nearly reduce the interior to a state of ruin, the outer walls are pretty entire. We traversed its courts, its avenues, and apartments, and ventured into the gloomy recesses below, endeavouring, perhaps with small success, to ascertain the purposes to which each was assigned, when the castle stood complete: the proud baronial residence of the lords of Gower;—or as history intimates, the occasional retreat of the Usurper Cromwell.

A few steps that seemed to tremble beneath our footsteps, led from the inner court to a narrow passage, that finally conducts into what we deemed the state room. The dimensions of this are considerable, but it retains no other vestige of ancient grandeur: rank weeds, and grass, and mouldering stones, choak up the area; along the walls the ivy wildly

wildly extends its branches, and trees flourish amid its ruins in unrestrained luxuriancy.—Beneath this we could easily discern a kind of artificial cavern, or arched way, the descent to which, was formerly, by means of a small flight of steps, traces of which remain. A tradition is extant among the country people, that in former days there was a subterraneous communication between this castle and that of Swansea, about four or five miles off, to the entrance of which they pretend this cavern once conducted. But such idle tales are related of almost every castle: in this instance we gave no credit to the report, at the same time that its ruinous appearance would have forbade us to explore its labyrinths, had we actually thought it true.

The labours of a country fellow, in one of the dismal dungeons below, attracted the remark of my inquisitive companion. The poor deluded mortal (as the story was related by a farmer's girl we met with in the ruins)

had unluckily dreamt that vast riches were buried underground in this place. Flushed with the certainty of reward, he stole every opportunity to ransack the dungeon unperceived. In the course of time the earth was excavated to a pretty considerable depth, yet still alas! his search was fruitless. The man, disheartened with his disappointment, became at length persuaded that the visionary disturber of his slumbers had deceived him, in consequence of which he desisted from further toil, leaving the earth thrown up round the opening of the pit in the state we saw it; a melancholy proof, among many others, of the superstitious credulity of which our nature is susceptible.—Were this a solitary example of the kind among those people, it would be undeserving mention, but it may be observed, that to dream of hoards of wealth secreted in the recesses of such ruins, and to make search for them in consequence, appears more congenial with the sentiments of the Cambrian peasantry, than any other.

other. We are led to consider it as an inherent trait of character in the people. Those of Gower, indeed, boast a different extraction, and appear from the instance above-mentioned to entertain the same ideas in this respect as their Cambrian neighbours.

Ascending the remains of a winding staircase near the gate, we reached a flight of steps leading to the battlements of the castle, from whence the spectator surveys the bay of Swansea to the greatest advantage possible.

That the shores of Swansea bay have suffered greatly by the encroachment of the sea, at no very distant period, is extremely obvious. A wide extent of forest land now lies buried beneath its sands. It is confidently asserted by the natives, that there was formerly a direct road from the Mumble point to Britton ferry, and that during one of the rebellions, the country people were afraid to pass through the woods from that point to Swansea,

Swansea, lest they should be surprised by a banditti of free booters who infested it. In confirmation of this event, branches of trees are not unfrequently washed out of the sands by the sea. The prevalence of fresh-water springs, in addition to those vegetable remains, may also account for the muddiness of the bay on the side contiguous to Mumble point. Coid-frank forest, standing between Swansea and Britton ferry in the time of Speed *, seems to have been, in a great measure, if not entirely, lost since that period. From the situation, we may be inclined to indulge the conjecture, that what is now called Cromlyn bog extends over part of the ground once occupied by this old forest.

In our return towards Swansea, at a short distance below the village of Oystermouth, a curious variety of the *Mytili* appeared, attached to the stones, that just emerge above the level of the sands, by means of their

* Mappe of Glamorganshire performed by John Speede, A. D. 1610.

byssus.

byssus. This kind, which the inattentive observer would easily mistake for the most common of our edible muscles, is nearly allied to *Mytilus incurvatus*. Like that species, the shell is thick, rather bent, dilated at the extremity, and pointed at the beak. But what is most remarkable, the broadest end is almost invariably marked with a pretty deep longitudinal incision, by means of which this end is divided into two distinct lobes. In several specimens this indent was defined so completely, that I was at first inclined to doubt whether it ought not rather to be considered as the discriminating character of a particular species, than a mere accident of growth. The common muscle, when the broadest extremity of the shell is injured, assumes somewhat of this appearance, but by no means either so regular, or so strongly marked as in the variety now mentioned. The shell of the latter is of a dark blueish purple colour externally: within pearly, and approaching, upon the whole, so nearly to *incurvatus*, that

that we must only venture to consider it as a very singular variety of that species *.

* The curious reader, it is conceived, will be disposed to pardon in this place a cursory digression on the natural productions said to be found in this neighbourhood. A small volume, entitled the Swansea Guide, is commonly put into the hands of strangers when they visit Swansea, which, among other particulars, professes to afford considerable information on this subject. To arraign the merits of this little compilation as a guide of general utility, would be improper; it may be useful, but when the anonymous compiler enters upon the topic of Natural History, we have to regret that he is likely to mislead both his reader and himself. He observes, that "no county in the island nourishes so great a variety of natural products as that of Glamorganshire, and he shall therefore, for the entertainment of the naturalist, enumerate the rarer productions that have been detected in the neighbourhood of Swansea." This is, indeed, a necessary prelude to the copious list subjoined, including nearly two-thirds of all the birds, and fishes, that have been discovered in Great Britain within the reach of record: his list of plants is also very considerable.

There is much to disappoint the naturalist in the perusal of this detail. It is very unlikely that many of the birds mentioned by this writer should ever have been seen here; and certainly his account of the fishes that haunt this coast, is not less exceptionable. *Gadus callarias*, the Torsk, for example, is spoken of: this we know to be fish exclusively confined to the north sea, and one perhaps never seen much nearer to the south than the northernmost isles of Scotland. But granting that a stray fish of this kind by chance has wandered into the Severn sea, where has he found *Salmo Lavaretus*, the Gwiniad? a fish peculiar to cold lakes, amidst the highest mountains of the north of Europe: nay even at this time extirpated from the alpine regions of Snowdon, and no where to be found in Wales, except in the lake of *Bala*, Merionethshire. He cannot mean to say any water near Swansea produces this. One further circumstance need alone be mentioned to shew what confidence can be placed in the assertions of this writer: *Blennius trifurcatus*, the trifurcated Hake, is given as a native

native of this part of Glamorganshire.—The remark is rather unfortunate, for the writer may rest satisfied there is no such fish in nature!

The latter comment will naturally excite surprise, and may possibly demand a more explicit elucidation, since Mr. Pennant describes the same fish in the British Ichthology.—We have then in the present instance to lament that this ingenious observer of nature, upon whose sole authority the existence of this species has hitherto rested, was himself mistaken. The specimen, as I am assured by the Rev. Hugh Davies, of Beaumaris, Anglesa, who actually sent it to Mr. Pennant, proving to be nothing more than the mutilated skin of the forked Hake (Blennius Phycis) a species described and even figured under its proper name in the same volume with the surreptitious trifurcated Hake.

It should be further added, that the true figure of this fish (Blennius Phycis) had been engraven for the work before Mr. Pennant received the mutilated skin abovementioned. By mischance the ventral fins in the latter specimen were accidentally split asunder, and otherwise injured in the carriage between Beaumaris, and the residence of Mr. Pennant at Downing, who upon inspecting it conceived he discovered the remains of three distinct rays in the ventral fins, and was induced in consequence to represent it as a nondescript. The mistake was not detected by this author till after the work was published, and as it was never afterwards avowed, the trifurcated Hake is erroneously allowed to retain a place in the British Zoology to this day. Gmelin, it is evident, entertains suspicion of this inaccuracy, from the following passage. "An trifurcated Hacka, quem Pennant, Brit. Zool. ad. 2. 3. p. 196. n. 84, decripsit. et gadus, quem Ascanius *icon*, &c.—delineatum dedit, propriæ sint species equidem accidere nollem." Dr. Turton, however, and Dr. Shaw, depending on the veracity of Mr. Pennant, have both described the trifurcated Hake as a species, without expressing any doubt concerning it.

CHAP. XIII.

Inland excursion down the peninsula of Gwr, or Gower.—Ride to Pennarth castle.—Oxwich bay.—Appearance of this tract of country:—its people; their dress, manners, and language distinct from the Welsh.—Grant of the land of Gower to Henry de Newburgh, earl of Warwick, by William Rufus.—History of Gower antecedent to that period.—Penrise castle.—Coed Arthur.—Webley castle.—Swansea reconsidered:—Cambrian pottery.—Cromllyn bog.—Botanical acquisitions.

A SECOND visit to this part of Glamorganshire allowed a far more convenient opportunity than the journey before-mentioned, for us to survey the eastern extremity of the promontory of Gower. Our design at this time was to pursue an inland route through the country. With this view we took horses

from

from Swansea, and after crossing the sands, passed over Moosey common, and from thence continued our ride along the main road to Pennarth castle, and the bay of Oxwich.

We encountered in this instance such unfavourable weather as forbids me to enlarge in very lively terms on the pleasure of our excursion: this in the sequel proving to be one of the most comfortless that could possibly be undertaken for the sake of amusement only.—Before we left Swansea, this tract of country was represented to us as an inhospitable region, bleak, barren, and rocky; thin of inhabitants, and destitute of every accommodation for the stranger.—A statement we have since observed to be not perfectly correct in every particular, although in a certain measure true. But I must confess it appeared to be strictly realized in the course of this day's journey. The lowering atmosphere cast a dismal gloom over the whole country, enveloping

veloping the horizon in obscurity. Upon the lofty rocky verge of the shore to the left, the fogs arising from the sea rolled heavily: the air was cold, and the rains beating violently in our faces from the westward in the space of an hour after we first set out, had nearly drenched us to the skin.—Under these circumstances we evidently surveyed the country to a lamentable disadvantage.

After crossing the sands of Swansea bay, our route laid across Moosey common, a dreary expansive level, at this time intersected by innumerable mazy currents, and pools of water, the effect of the heavy rains that had lately fallen. Beyond this common we pursued the principal highway, an indifferent road, or rather in many places a narrow muddy lane, on each side shut in by meadows, or lands in a tolerable state of cultivation. At intervals the features of human society intervened on the road, the poor peasants, cold, shivering, and dripping with wet, returning from

RENNARTH CASTLE.

from the fields to the shelter of their humble dwellings, the sequestered cottages that peeped upon our view as we proceeded.

The change of soil to heavy sands, convinced us of our near approach to the sea, which the fog at first prevented us from seeing. Shortly after, a pretty considerable declivity over a lofty sand bank, brought us to the edge of the desert heath upon which the old castle of Pennarth is situated. Setting spurs to our horses, we soon crossed this heath, and arrived at a cluster of cottages, where we alighted to make a few enquiries, and then directed our way to the ruin which we observed at a moderate distance from us.

Pennarth castle stands at the extremity of this sandy heath, rising upon the verge of a rocky cliff on the side of a small valley, through which a trifling stream is observed to flow, in its direction from the hills about five miles off, towards the bay of Oxwich, the

latter of which lies immediately below to the southward of this ruin. Except from the rocky precipice above the valley, we could not perceive any difficulty in the access to this building. The entrance is in front of the castle, facing the east, and overlooking the sands by which it is in a great measure surrounded.

This ruin, from the remoteness of its station, becomes the more interesting. The country people have a curious idea concerning it. They say it was never built with hands, but raised in a night by the power of enchantment, and believe it still to be the lurking place of a particular tribe of fairies. Historians attribute the building to Richard, an earl of Warwick. It is apparently impossible, however, to name its founder with any degree of certainty. We may venture to conclude that he must have been one of the earlier lords of Gower, who became possessed of the lordship soon after the Norman conquest.

conquest. If Henry de Newburgh erected Penrise castle, as is commonly believed, the castle of Pennarth might possibly owe its origin to the same source. The style of building will not permit us, at any rate, to refer it to any earlier date than the Norman conquest.

Great part of this castle is built with a most durable sort of stone, supposed to be found in some of the neighbouring rocks, consisting of semitransparent whitish quartz pebbles, imbedded in a quartzose cement of a reddish brown colour. We enter the ruin through a pointed arched gateway, between two rounded towers, both of which are mutilated above. In the walls of those towers are several lancet apertures, for the discharge of arrows. Other openings of a quadrangular form are observable in various parts of the building, and all the walls are furnished with battlements. The space within the walls, after passing through the gateway, is nearly of a circular form, about

forty yards in length, and almost as much across. The remains of a square apartment is visible at that extremity nearest to the verge of the cliff.

Both within this ruin, and upon the sandy heath contiguous, I gathered specimens of a few uncommon plants. One, a kind of whitlow grass, the *Draba aizoides* of Linnæus, which appears to be unknown before as a British plant*. This we observed growing wild in plenty upon the castle walls, clinging by means of its entangling roots, to the crevices between the stones.

A multitude of shells are drifted with the

* Draba aizoides being an early flowering plant, I found it with the capsules in full seed in the end of the month of July (1802). In this state the species is known by having the stalks naked, the lanceolate rigid leaves fringed at the edges with distinct whitish hairs, and the midrib strongly carinated. Dr. Turton, of Swansea, discovered this plant in the same spot in the month of March, at which season it appears in blossom. Specimens of it were sent by this gentleman to Dr. Smith, who described it as a new and very interesting addition to our stock of native British plants, in the beginning of the year 1804.

loose

loose sands that lie upon the slope leading from this castle to Oxwich bay. None, however, of those we saw were remarkable for rarity. Midway down this sandy declivity, I observed a small rock of singular formation, nearly buried in the sands. This is composed of calcareous spar, crystallised in small pointed columnar figures, appearing generally when broken very prettily disposed in stellated groups, or *nuclei* of crystals, radiating from a common center. The colour milky, yellowish, and tinged in parts with pale red.

Oxwich bay is seen from the eminence by Pennarth, or, as it is sometimes called, Pennard castle, to great advantage in fine weather. The rocks contiguous are of a romantic character. On the further side of the bay, the church and parsonage of Oxwich forms a conspicuous feature, rising under the shelter of the bold projection of Oxwich point, and a little more to the northward stands the castle of Penrise.

Proceeding from Pennarth to the north east, we enter the main road from Swansea to Rosilly point. This passes in its westerly direction near the foot of Penmaen. A road turns to the left before we reach Renoldstone, that leads straight to Penrise.—The old castle of Penrise, or Penrees, takes its name, we are told, from the family of Penrise, who made it their place of residence. The castle and estate came to the Mansels by marriage of Isabel, daughter and heiress to Sir John Penrise, Knt. a descendant from Philip, who attended William the Conqueror into England, and whose posterity settled in this country in the time of Edward the first*. After this, it devolved by marriage to the Mansel family, and by another marriage descended from the Mansel family to that of Talbot. The building, whose poor remains are now standing, is said to have been erected by Robert de Bellemont, (or rather Henry de Newburgh, his son,) upon the spot where Rees, the son

* Buck's Antiquities.

of

of Caradoc ap Iestyn, was slain in battle by the Normans in the defence of his own inheritance, the lands of Gower. This aged ruin is converted into an aviary, contiguous to which Thomas Mansel Talbot, Esq. the owner of the estate, has lately erected, and fitted up an elegant villa.

Upon the north west of Ceven Brin, one of the highest mountains of South Wales, stands a stupendous cromlech, called *Coed Arthur*, or Arthur's stone, a remnant of druidical antiquity, supposed to be the "stone of sketty," mentioned in the Welsh triads.

In point of fertility, the lands of Gower can scarcely be compared with the richly cultivated districts of Glamorganshire in general. The soil near the coast is naturally rocky, sandy, and from the exposure of situation, incapable of the same degree of improvement. Through the spirited exertions of several gentlemen who have seats

in this part of the country, the more productive spots of land have been brought into an excellent state of cultivation. Among others, the country is highly indebted to the present owner of the Penrise estate, for the considerable agricultural improvements it has undergone within the last five years. A breed of sheep is cultivated upon the extensive downs in this tract, that produces excellent mutton, and wool of a superior quality and fineness.

From all that we could learn of the inhabitants, they appear to be a civil, well-disposed people. The great source of antipathy between them and their Cambrian neighbours the Welsh, arises from the obstinate tenacity with which each retains the original manners of their forefathers. The natives of this part of Gower, pride themselves in being the descendants of those Flemings who settled here many centuries ago, and in their customs, dress, and other peculiarities, preserve the Flemish

Flemish character to this day. The tract they live in, is emphatically denominated "Little England beyond Wales *." The Welsh tongue is not spoken among them; their dialect is English. They have an hereditary aversion to the Welsh people, and very rarely associate, or enter into family compact by marriage with them. Brown, either plain or in stripes, is the colour most frequently worn among them, as blue is among the Welsh. The women, for the sake of further distinction, wear a small scarlet mantle, called the Gwry whittle. On the contrary, the females of the South-wallian peasantry use scarlet cloaks of a moderate length, or sometimes, though not commonly, towards the upper parts of South Wales, the long blue, such as is universally worn in North Wales.—Agriculture is the

* The exact situation of "Little England beyond Wales," as it is denominated, appears ambiguous. Sometimes we have heard the whole peninsula of West Gower distinguished by this title. In other instances we have been told it ought to be understood as applying only to a small tract in the neighbourhood of Cheriton, a little village on the west side of Gower. The vicinity of Narberth, in Pembrokeshire, certainly bears the same name; this latter was the country of Rhos, granted to the Flemings by Henry the First.

chief

chief employment of this people. Among those, however, who reside close to the sea coast, it is beyond conjecture, that an illicit traffic in foreign spirits, and other contraband goods, is carried on to a very great extent.

The ancestors of this people are thought to be a colony of those Flemings who were driven out of their native country by the dreadful inundation of the sea, about the year 1105. Vast numbers of those people fled to England on this occasion, where they were well received. But the English becoming jealous of so many foreigners being admitted into the kingdom, Henry the first, then king of England, from motives of policy, thought proper to convene them from different parts of his dominions, and settle them together as a colony in one spot. The Welsh had been but very recently reduced to obedience by that monarch. They were still considered as rebellious subjects, and Henry conceived, by settling the Flemings, who were

were an active, warlike people in their country, it would operate as a check upon their designs. He therefore assigned to them the *Cantref* of *Rhos*, in *Pembrokeshire*, where their posterity remains at this time. Part of the colony, soon after their arrival in Pembrokeshire, are supposed to have fixed their station in the west side of the peninsula of Gower. This is the prevailing idea, but upon what authority is uncertain. The Flemings, under the auspices both of the Normans, and the English, contrived, in various instances, to establish themselves in small parties, in different places, on the coast of South Wales, long after that time, as well as at that period.

That Gower was not wrested from the Welsh by Henry the first, as is traditionally accredited, in order to people it with a part of this particular colony of Flemings, or any other, is very clear. Gower was previously granted by William Rufus to Henry de Newburgh, son of Roger de Bellemont, created earl of Warwick by

by the Conqueror William. The success of Fitzhamon, who just before acquired, by the force of arms, the ancient lordship of Glamorganshire, encouraged Henry de Newburgh to ask for the lands of Gower*, which William Rufus granted on the condition that he should subdue the country, and become responsible for the obedience of the inhabitants to the English monarchy. Henry succeeded in his attempts upon the country. He defeated the two sons of Caradoc ap Iestyn in battle, and seized upon Gower by the right of conquest. This happened before the year 1093. The calamitous inundation of Flanders, already adverted to, occurred in the year 1105. The people, driven for safety to England on that occasion, settled in South Wales, at the desire of the king, very soon after, but they were placed in Pembrokeshire, and if Gower was ever peopled with Flemings from that colony,

* To obviate an apparent contradiction, it ought to be observed in this place, that in the ancient division of the country, Glamorganshire extended on this side only to the east of Swansea, Caermarthenshire, and not Glamorganshire as at this time, then including all Gowerland.

it

it could not have been immediately; this consideration will prove at least that Henry the first did not deprive the Welsh of this part of their territory in order to bestow it on those Flemish settlers. The most plausible conjecture appears to be, that when Henry de Newburgh conquered Gower, he garrisoned the strong places with Norman and English, or, as they are denominated, Saxon soldiery; permitting the Welsh, if they thought expedient, to continue in the country as his vassals. They appear even to have remained obedient to him, and to the oppressions of the Norman yoke till the year 1093, when the Welsh determined to endure their tyranny no longer. They rose in rebellion to oppose them, and through their various struggles with the combined forces of the Normans, the country of Gower became at length in a great measure depopulated. The Flemings, during all this time, were not settled in Gower, neither is it probable that they took up their station here till about the close of the twelfth century.

The

The history of Gower presents a picture of former times not altogether uninteresting. Prior to the conquest, the country many times endured all the evils incidental to civil discord among its people. The Welsh historians themselves confess, that when their countrymen were exempt from foreign enemies, they never failed to quarrel with each other, and that, many times, on occasions the most frivolous. Sometimes their tranquillity was disturbed through the haughty ambition of their chieftains conspiring the overthrow of their rivals: a principality, or a lordship, then becoming the object of dispute, the quarrel assumed another character, which, while it encreased the attendant evils, impressed it at least with features of greater dignity.—Thus in the year 990, Edward ap Eineon conceiving his right to the Principality of South Wales to be greater than that of Meredith, who enjoyed it, called in a formidable army of English and Danes to assist him against his own countrymen, and laid waste

great

great part of the country of Gower, as well as Pembrokeshire and Kidwelly.

Gowerland was reduced to greater misery in the year 1093, when it appears to have been literally depopulated. This happened during the cruel wars between the Normans stationed here, and the native Welsh. The former had suffered much disgrace in being beaten by the united forces of the confederated princes of North and South Wales, Cadogan and Gryffydh, and by way of retaliation, so harassed the countries of *Gower* and Kidwelly, that, to use the expressive language of the historian, "they left it bare of inhabitants." It must have been again in part possessed by the Welsh, for the following year the inhabitants joined with their countrymen in a further attempt to throw off the yoke of the Normans, and in this they were so far successful as to drive them for safety into their strong holds and castles, till they could be powerfully reinforced from England. In 1113 the Normans were masters of the country

country of Gower, for when Gryffydh ap Rhys, prince of South Wales turned his arms against it, William de Lundres, who then commanded the Normans in Gower, retreated from that country with his men, leaving his castle deserted, in order, as we are told, to avoid more fatal consequences.

The history of after-times is filled with the the detail of warfare between the Normans, English, and Flemings against the Welsh, but in which Gowerland in particular is scarcely ever mentioned till the reign of king John, when the year 1215 proved productive of another series of disasters to that country. The enterprising Rhys Vechan, flushed with many recent victories over the English, entered Gowerland in this year, and in the space of three days, became master of all the castles and fortresses, both in that country and in Morgannwc, or Glamorganshire, and then returned home with great triumph. In this event, Swansea castle must have fallen into the hands of the Welsh. Gower was afterwards redelivered, however,

into

into the hands of Reynald Bruce, the former lord, in consideration of his promise not to assist the king of England against Llewelyn, at that time Sovereign Prince of South Wales.

But to return.—As we rode back over Swansea bay, the hedges close to the sands appeared prettily decorated with the burnet rose, *rosa spinosissima*, in full blossom. This plant grows in plenty near this coast. Nothing of further consequence attracted notice, as the day was hastily drawing to a close before we regained the sands in our route back.

A cursory inspection of the Cambrian pottery, conducted under the firm of Messrs. Haynes and Company, afforded us much amusement the last time we spent a day or two in the vicinity of Swansea, in our way to Caermarthen. This concern, I am persuaded, will be thought to merit a much more explicit description than it may be in my power to communicate. Some idea may, however, be

conceived of it from the following particulars, which we, as strangers, were at liberty to observe.

The plan upon which these works are carried on by the company, is nearly similar to that of Mr. Wedgewood's. The whole comprises an extensive suite of work rooms, furnaces, and baking kilns, in which the various kinds of earthen ware, and porcelain, are manufactured from the raw materials; the whole being moulded, formed, glazed, baked, printed, painted, and otherwise completely finished in the several apartments within the circuit of the works.

The materials of which the different sorts of ware are formed, is kept a secret as much as possible; the art of manufacturing the superior kinds of porcelain in particular, depends indeed upon a correct and perfect knowledge of the properties of the various sorts

sorts of clay employed, and the other ingredients intermixed with them *.

Most

* Porcelain, the indefatigable Reaumur very properly considers as a semi-vitrification, and concludes that the perfection of the art consists in the principle of uniting a due proportion of the several ingredients, as well as in afterwards burning them with nicety. Argillaceous earths, as he observes, will vitrify when exposed to the degree of heat required for burning the ware. It therefore follows that no true porcelain can be made with clays alone: other matter must be united with the clay to prevent their perfect vitrification, or becoming glass.

Magnesia in various forms is the medium now employed for this purpose, because when submitted to an intense heat it melts, and runs to an opake mass. This we therefore know must be a principal ingredient in the manufacture of the superior kinds of porcelain. The Chinese *Kaolin*, and the *Petunsa*, which are probably the same, (the latter only being ground to a powder and worked into clay with water,) is found to contain magnesia in some quantity. The *steatites*, or soap stone of Cornwall, has been used with more success than any other substance in the potteries of England. This species of magnesia contains within itself nearly all the requisites for making porcelain, the magnesian and argillaceous earth being combined with silex in almost the same proportions as those different ingredients are mixed together in preparing the clay for making that kind of ware. The rocks producing this valuable material, (the steatites) are situated close to the shore, between Mullion and the Lizard, in the county of Cornwall. Steatites does not appear to have been made use of in the manufacture of our wares of this nature, till after the middle of the last century, about which time the new soap rock was discovered at Gew Grez, or Corez Cove, in the parish of Mullion. Da Costa, in his history of fossils, published in 1757, might possibly have given the first hint of the utility of this substance. "It is evident," says Da Costa, "that no species of clay whatever, can be finer, or fitter for the making of porcelain, than these hardened talcy soap clays'

Most of the clay, as we were informed here, is the product of Derbyshire. As a first process, this clay is well washed, and intermixed with a fourth, or fifth proportion of common flint, the latter of which is finely pulverised in a mill contrived for the purpose. This mixture is cleared from all impurities by the operation of sifting and washing, after which the substance is dried by an exposure to heat,

wherein nature has blended the necessary fossils, tale and clay, ready for our use. I am therefore convinced, that those *steatites* pounded, then moistened, and worked up like a paste, with some proportion (if thought necessary) of fine soft clay, with due management, would make an elegant porcelain: I recommend the experiment for trials, to the manufactories lately established in this kingdom."—At the present period the soap rocks are the property of some one, or more, of the Staffordshire companies, who rent the land for the sake of the steatites, and employ people on the spot to collect it for the supply of their potteries.—Those kinds of granite in which a large proportion of the felspar prevails, when artificially decomposed (by calcination,) is also used for the same purpose. A fine white soft argil, that was made use of some years in the manufacture of English china, was formerly found in Devonshire: whether this bed of clay is worked at this time or not, we are uncertain. The common white and yellow ware is made of different sorts of clay, veins of which are found in Derbyshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and various other parts of England. The black ware of Wedgewood's is formed of basalt; vast quantities of which were imported some years ago from the giant's causeway in the north of Ireland, by Mr. Wedgewood, for this species of manufacture.

kneaded

then kneaded to a proper consisteney, and lastly well beaten to exclude the air, not the smallest bubble of which is allowed to remain, or the work would be inevitably spoiled by that means.—The mixture thus prepared is ready for the moulder.

Dishes, plates, and other shallow articles are formed on moulds that turn horizontally with the motion of the hand, the inside of the article receiving the impression from the mould, while the under surface is wrought into form by the hand, with the assistance of a little stick, and paring instruments. Mugs, tea pots, cups, and other deep hollow vessels, are shaped upon the potter's lathe, a very simple contrivance, in which a small board, or nut, is kept in a brisk rotatory motion by a boy, or woman, who turns the wheel of the machine, while the potter forms the vessel. The clay is supplied in lumps of the required size, by boys. One of these lumps the man places on the nut, first pressing his knuckles

into the middle to form the hollow, and afterwards while it turns round, by the mere modulation of his fingers, the revolving piece of clay assumes, in a few seconds, the same shape and size as the pattern he holds in his other hand to look at, or as is placed by the side of him with that view.

The cup or other vessel thus regularly, but roughly formed, is conveyed to the drying room, where it is allowed to remain some time to harden, before it is carried into another apartment, where it is curtailed, if necessary, to the exact height required. Here the stands are shaped out, and the surface trimmed very smoothly with various kinds of paring instruments, while the vessel turns upon the nut of a lathe of a somewhat more complicated structure than the former. Spouts, and handles, if wanted, are added next, as are also the basso relievo figures, or other ornaments of that nature, with which the ware is sometimes decorated. The vessels being thus completed

completed in the desired form, they are next to pass through the hands of the glazer, who dips them into a solution of lithrage, or lead, containing a proportion of powdered flint, and other ingredients, that vitrify upon exposure to the intense action of the fire. After receiving this glaze, they are dried and baked for a given space of time in the baking kilns, and the ware is then finished for use, unless it is intended to be embellished with colours.

The process of printing devices in the ordinary way upon the ware in a single colour, whether blue, brown, black, or any other, is simple and expeditious. Or if more than one colour even is to be employed, the additional trouble is very trifling. The embellishments on the superior kinds, especially the porcelain, is on the contrary difficult, and requires to the full as much care as the artist would bestow on any other kind of painting of equal merit.

In the printing room we saw the former process. A number of young women and girls are engaged in this department. These we found seated at long tables on each side of the room, and near the middle stood the printer with his rolling press, copper plates, ovens, and fusible colours.—All the designs we see on the common white earthen ware such as tea cups, saucers, basins, and the like, are for the most part struck off from patterns engraven deeply on copper plates. Upon any one of these that may be wanted, the printer plaisters on his fusible colours with a large pallet knife, and dabber, while the plate is heating over the oven. He next wipes the surface of the plate, lays a thin moistened paper upon it, passes it between the rollers of his printing press, and lastly takes off the paper, which by this time has received the impression of every stroke of the engraving in the fusible colour nearly as distinct as if worked off in common printer's ink. The paper is next handed to the women, one of whom,

whom, with a large brush, runs a thin coat of flour-paste over the face of the print. Another cuts the print into slips, according to the size of the objects represented, and a third applies those slips to the sides, borders, or cavity of the vessel, to which the paper immediately adheres by the tenacity of the paste. When sufficiently dry, these are rubbed pretty smartly with a small flannel roller, to press the paper close. After a time the articles are dipped into a tub of water, where the paper is rubbed off with a sponge, and the impression is found to be transferred from the paper to the surface of the ware.

The colours are of the metallic kind, but are not used in a crude state. Cobalt, an expensive article, forms the rich blue. This is reduced for use to a state of oxyde, which entirely deprives it of its native brilliance. When first printed this colour is of a dirty black, but being easily converted into glass when exposed to a sufficient degree of vitrifying

fying heat, becomes again of a fine blue, in the baking. Oxyde of magancse forms the browns. Sometimes, for th sake of variety, the flowers, leaves, and other ornaments, are filled up in differet colours with a pencil, by the women. Tis is not unfrequently the practice in the earthn ware of Staffordshire.

We now come to the last process in wich the porcelain of the most superior kinds are decorated with emblematical designs, landscape fruit, flowers, heraldic figures, or any other species of ornamental devices. The whole of this is executed by the pencil of the painter. The various objects are slightly sketched in black-lead upon the ware after it is glazed, and is only submitted to a certain degree of heat in the baking kilns when nearly finished, to fix the metallic colours in their proper tints.—The preparation of the colours is kept a profound secret, each improving them according to his own ideas, and knowledge derived from practical experience; and having

once

once brought them to perfection, we are not to be surprized that they should endeavour to preserve the advantage of those discoveries to themselves. The greatest art required in this department, consists in knowing with precision the true tint each colour will assume after the painting has passed the fiery ordeal, in which the metallic *calxes* are converted into glass, a change they must all undergo before their work is completed.

The chemical properties of certain colours employed in this sort of painting, is not indeed unknown, either to the mineralogist, or the artist. All the gilding is done with pure gold, or gold with very little alloy: this is first reduced to an impalpable powder, and then ground up with oil of spike to such a state of consistency as to work freely in a common hair pencil:—gum water is also occasionally made use of. This metallic substance, when laid on the ware, is of a blackish colour, with a brassy hue, and requires burnishing after

after it is baked to revive the native brilliancy of the metal. Gold likewise enters into the composition of their purples: a solution of tin is prepared with *nitro-muriatic* acid, and being saturated with a small proportion of gold held also in solution, deposits a crimson precipitate, which after a few days becomes of a fine purple.—Copper calcined by acids, and precipitated by an alkali, forms a beautiful green.—An oxyde of iron produces brown or black, and various earths that are slightly ferruginous affords browns, and yellows of various hues.—Biscuit porcelain, or that without any glaze or painting, is also executed here in great perfection.

This interesting topic has led perhaps to a more formal digression than the casual remarks of the tourist may allow, but the motives that induced it claim some apology. We are to consider the manufacture of the superior kinds of porcelain in our country as an improvement in our national arts. The

The elegance of this ware is not to be denied; in one respect at least, it has an advantage over the porcelain of India:—its embellishments are certainly more chaste, more tasteful and appropriate. Capricious fashion may for a time assign a preference to the manufacture of our continental neighbours, but it will admit of doubt whether some of the better kinds of our home-made porcelain, under the management of such ingenious individuals as the conductors of those works, may not bid fair one day to vie successfully even with the boasted produce of the Seive pottery.—We have no other rival on the continent of Europe to dispute the palm with us.

Cromllyn bog lies about two miles, or less, to the eastward of the ferry across the Tawe river, running for four computed miles in a direction parallel with the old road between Neath and Swansea. This dreary waste bears no inconsiderable share of reputation with our botanists for the variety of uncommon plants

plants to which its teeming soil give birth. None indeed but botanists would traverse it; and of their number, only those who are not to be accused of indifference to the pursuits of this pleasing science. I wandered myself for hours over this bog, wading at times through its swamps knee deep, and at the hazard of suffocation in the event of slipping down, in search of a few of its tantalizing weeds *.

Through the public spirit of a gentleman in the neighbourhood of Swansea, a navigable canal has been cut with great labour through this morass. Hopes are also entertained that other parts of the bog may yet be

* Several new British plants are said to have been discovered in Cromllyn bog. We only met with a few of the more common kinds peculiar to such situations in our ramble over it, such as Drosera rotundifolia, Nympha alba, Iris lutea and the elegant, though not unfrequent Menyanthes trifolius in full blossom. Nympha alba must have been very common here formerly, the ligneous reticulated branches of its roots appearing every where in plenty buried in the mud. Schœnus mariscus was observed in this bog some years ago by Sir Joseph Banks. It was then esteemed a rare plant, but since that time it has been found in several other parts of the kingdom.

rendered

rendered useful. Attempts have been made by cutting trenches to draw off the superabundant waters, and by degrees restore its outskirts to a proper state for cultivation. The western extremity of the bog has been dug, and turned up, to a great extent with this view, and in all probability the design will be attended with success.

CHAP. XIV.

Fifty miles circuit between Swansea, Caermarthen, and Kidwelly.—Upper road by Lannon. Cors Eynon.—Pont-ar-Dulas; and the Loughor river.—Abundance of coal, and culm.—Lannon village.—Mynydd Dû, the black mountains.—Romantic Glen.—View of the Towey vale.—Route from Swansea by the lower road.—Lanelly.—Ruinous mansion of Sir John Stepney.—Collieries, and other works in the vicinity of Lanelly town.—View of the peninsula of Gower across the Barry river.—Penbray hill.—Kidwelly marshes: — town: — harbour: — trade:—castle, &c.—Excursion to Caermarthen.—Distant prospect of Llanstephan from the heights above the Towey vale.

A JOURNEY of thirteen miles across an open tract of country, brought us from Swansea to Lannon, a small village situated midway

midway between the former town, and the city of Caermarthen.—The road passes for the most part over a hilly range of land; at Lannon, in particular, it reaches a considerable elevation.

To the stranger this route offers little o amuse: the scenic beauties of the country alone deserve particular remark. Many pleasing situations occur upon the road, nor is its aspect altogether destitute of features of a more impressive nature; in certain points of view the swarthy pinnacles of the Black mountains are seen aspiring above the stupendous sweep of hills that shut in the prospect on the distant horizon to the eastward.

Coal is every where abundant in this tract, and in the whole country to the southward of Lannon, even to the sea shore. We are told that in some places the veins rise, and appear so close to the surface of the earth, that with a spade and pickaxe only, the coal may be

obtained in plenty by the inhabitants for their own consumption. The truth of this we had not the opportunity of ascertaining, but in our rambles afterwards across the country, I have often observed, with unaffected pleasure, what hoards of this desirable fuel the meanest cottager had in store to repel the inclemencies of the seasons:—to cheer his heart, when—

> " nought around
> Strikes his sad eye but deserts lost in snow
> And heavy-loaded groves, and solid floods
> That stretch athwart the solitary vast
> Their icy horrors."
>
> THOMSON.

How gratifying would be such a prospect of comfort during the severity of winter in many other districts of the Principality of Wales, where nature has been far less bountiful in this particular. In the interior parts, and among the mountainous regions both of South and North Wales, generally speaking, they have no coal but what is imported, or conveyed from the maritime districts up the country for their use, and then the price is considerable.

PONT-AR DYLAS BRIDGE.

London Published as the Act directs by J. Boydell May 1st 1786.

considerable. So many forests that formerly supplied the Welsh with firing, are destroyed, that wood is scarce. Peat is their customary fuel, and this they are oftentimes unable to procure without vast trouble from the turberies in the wastes and morasses, or from the summits of their highest hills.

Pont-ar-Dulas, or the bridge upon the Dulas, lies in this road, about nine or ten miles beyond Swansea, serving to connect the two counties of Glamorgan and Caermarthen, which that river separates. The Dulas river is a branch of the Loughor, which after passing the town of that name, falls into the Burry river, and from thence into the sea. This bridge is a ruinous, antiquated structure of four arches, two of which are dissimilar from the others. The broken parapet is beautifully overhung with ivy. We descended along the banks of the river to the southward, to survey it to the best advantage, and from this position really thought

the bridge, with its attendant scenery, highly picturesque for a close sequestered spot.

This river produces the Sewen in excellent perfection, during the summer months, at which season they ascend in shoals from the sea. There is a small house of entertainment at the foot of this bridge, where company frequently halt for refreshments, and from whence parties sometimes take excursions along the banks of the river.—Lannelly forest extended formerly to this spot.

About four miles beyond Pont-ar-Dulas, we passed through Lannon, a small village, standing upon the brow of a lofty eminence, with the church in the bottom just below the road.

Lannon church is a neat respectable looking edifice, and were it situated on the pinnacle of the hill, instead of occupying its present low position on the declivity,

vity, would become an appropriate object in the foreground of the fine sweep of hills and plains that are disclosed from the summit of this commanding elevation. The *Ceven-Llwydcot* lies immediately in the front.

At the king's head inn upon this hill we waited for some time for a change of horses, before we could proceed on the next stage. The second part of our journey was equally barren of local incident as the former. As the road winds at intervals across the hills, a number of little cottages, scattered over the adjacent country, rise to view, amidst the dips, and bourns, and verdant meadows, that lie extended widely before us upon the right: on the other side our prospects were effectually impeded for a long time by the higher parts of the hills, across the side of which this road has been constructed.

But at length the tedious sameness of the landscape was relieved by a burst of scenery,

partaking of a more majestic character:—A glen or cwm, as the Welsh express it, of an awful depth, whose verge, and shaggy descents are finely clothed with trees that start in wild disorder from the crevices of the rocks, where a scanty soil has accumulated sufficiently to afford them nurture, and spreading their expansive branches over the chasm, cast a sullen, dismal gloom upon the recess below. In vain the eye attempts to trace the mazy current of the stream, that raves among the rocks in the bottom. At every step its ceaseless repercussions swell more loudly upon the ear, still its waters are impervious: the thickets overspread them, save only at intervals, where its whitened foam emerges for a moment to the day, and then again is lost; shrinking in hollow tumult among the rocks and trees that lie scattered in the depths of the terrific chasm.—The whole of this romantic glen is commanded from the main road which has been carried close along the verge of it for some way.

This

This striking sport of nature intervenes within three miles of Caermarthen, a city of which we shortly after obtained an imperfect glance, for on the turn of the hills we were now descending, the vale of Towey is unexpectedly disclosed in all its beauty, with the river, and the city of Caermarthen rising on a conspicuous range of land in the distance.

The lower road from Swansea to Caermarthen lies through Kidwelly, a route the tourist may possibly explore with greater satisfaction than that above retraced. Formerly the mail coach travelled upon the lower road; it was then the fashionable resort of company: the highways were kept in as good repair as the nature of the country would permit: part of the marshes was drained, raised roads constructed, bridges re-edified, and every other convenience adopted that was considered likely to improve it. But after all these endeavours, the surveyors perceived that the road by Lannon, with far less expence,

might be rendered preferable; the distance being nearly the same by either, the Lannon road was repaired accordingly, and the other is at length, in consequence, become in a great measure deserted.

Last summer, upon our leaving Swansea, we took the lower road in preference. Till we reached the extremity of Glamorganshire at Pont-ar-Dulas, our route was the same as in the former instance, but after crossing the Dulas river, instead of following the western road, we passed the inn, and turned obliquely to the southward, in the direct track for Lanelly *.

Here the eye rests for a while upon a dismal marshy flat, through which the Loughor flows before it falls into the Burry river. As we rode nearer to Lanelly, the Burry river,

* The western road from Swansea through the town of Loughor, affords a shorter, though less commodious route to Lanelly than that to Pont-ar-Dulas. But after passing the Loughor town, it is necessary to ford the Loughor river, a task of some difficulty except at low water.

with

with the distant peninsula of Gower, became the principal features to the southward; Lanelly town being stationed at no great distance from the banks of that expansive sheet of water.

Lanelly is a small dirty looking town, supported chiefly by the productive collieries that lie contiguous: there is a smelting work for iron established lately here by Messrs. Raby and Co. of Swansea, and another of copper, in its vicinity. The Lanelly coal is of a good quality. Probably those pits were the first worked in the lordship of Kidwelly: Leland speaks of them in Henry the eighth's time *, and the mines still appear to be inexhaustible. A large steam engine has been recently erected on the spot, for the purpose of carrying off the water with which some of the pits

* "At *Llanelthle*," says Leland, "a village of Kidwelli lordship a VI miles from *Kidwelli*, the inhabitans digge coles, elles scant in Kidwelly land."—"There be two Maner of thes Coles. Ring Coles for Smiths be blowed and waterid,"—"Llanelthle Coles Ring Colis." Itin. v. 5. p. 22. fol. 25.

are

are overflowed.—Petrifactions, or impressions of fossil plants in coal slate, it should be observed, are occasionally discovered in the veins that overlay the coal in this neighbourhood. I have also some in sand stone from this place, one in particular, a large fragment of the gigantic stem of some unknown kind of vegetable, eleven inches in circumference, and bearing a singular reticulated surface, with a deep longitudinal sulcus on one side. This spot affords, likewise, a peculiar kind of *Anthropomorphi*, impressed on dark slate *.

Our survey of this town did not detain us long. The only object of curiosity in the

* This curious creature is mentioned by *Luidii*, who gives a figure of it. Some have mistaken it for a petrified fish of the sole tribe, to which the flat species found in Wales bears some resemblance in its external outline. There are other species of the Anthropomorphus, one or two of which are found about Dudley, in Worcestershire, that are of a more convex form, and shew much plainer the structure of this description of animals. Lipscomb, in his tour of South Wales, lately published, when passing through Dudley, calls these petrified *Locusts!* The workmen, when they find either the upper or the lower half, (the mutilated state in which they are commonly found in the limestone) have an idea that they are the remains of *Butterflies*.

place

place is a large old fashioned mansion, once the residence of Sir John Stepney, at this time in a ruinous condition: nearly all the windows, which were numerous formerly, have been blockaded up by the poor families that inhabit it, to avoid the window rates, which serves to render its appearance still more deplorable than it would be otherwise.

Lanelly church is a large irregular building, with two steeples, one, a quadrangular embattled tower, and the other with a tapering spire: the old cross in the church yard is not entirely demolished, the pyramid of steps, and the base of the shaft remaining.

A romantic pass intervenes as the road ascends over the Penbray hill, after leaving Lanelly, from whence an extensive prospect meets the eye, comprising the marsh of Kidwelly, the sea, the western extremity of the Gower peninsula, and the channel beyond. Having flattered our expectations that from this

this exalted eminence we might have been able to survey the tract of Gower very distinctly, we were rather disappointed, for, contrary to our wishes, the weather proved remarkably hazy as we passed over the hill; insomuch, indeed, that we could only just discern the Ceven-Brin, the highest mountain in this peninsula, through the obscurity of the mists that rolled upon its summit. When the weather is serene, there can be no doubt that the prospect from hence must be amazingly fine.

Descending from the hills, the road conducts across a dreary waste of marshes, in the course of which we passed over the *Gwendraeth Vawr*, a river remarkable for the number of coal pits on its banks, and shortly after, a new canal cut parallel with the river by Miss Reymer, to facilitate the conveyance of coal from her valuable collieries, three miles and a half inland down to the Kidwelly port. These intervene before we reach Kidwelly town,

KIDWELLY CASTLE

London, Published as the Act directs by Fullarton & Co. 1804.

town, where we arrived at a late hour towards the evening, and put up our horses for the night.

Kidwelly was in ancient time a town of great traffic. Its harbours were so well frequented as to render it the rival of Caermarthen: the fisheries of this port were considerable; its coal trade great, and it had besides a flourishing internal business in the cloathing line. But the condition of the place has been for years on the decline. By virtue of its charter, the affairs of the town are regulated by a mayor, who is chosen annually.—About the middle of the sixteenth century, Leland speaks of Caermarthen having increased in consequence of the decay of the Kidwelly harbour, the entrance of which became suddenly intercepted by a dangerous sand bank, driven up by the sea, that prevented vessels of large burthen from sailing up the river as before. It is worthy of remark, that this bar of sand, after laying so long in the situation above-

mentioned,

mentioned, as to almost ruin the Kidwelly port, separated a few years back, of its own accord in the middle, and now affords a sufficient depth of water for the vessels commonly employed in the trade of this part of the country to come up the river.—Leland mentions also the new and old town, which are connected by the bridge across the *Gwendraeth Vach*, a river that takes its rise above Pont-ar-Hydd, about twelve miles to the north east, and after passing through Kidwelly, falls at less than three miles further into the great bay of Caermarthen. The old town in the time of this writer was nearly desolated, but the wall surrounding it appears from his words to have been entire, for he tells us this part was "pretily waulid," and that he saw "three gates ther." The old town is at present inconsiderable.

Passing along the old town, we recognize the ruinous antique gateway which Grose has represented. Kidwelly castle rises at a small distance

tance beyond it, upon an artificial mount on the side of the marshes.—This castle, allowed to be the most perfect building of the kind in Wales, is certainly a magnificent remain of ancient military architecture. There is an air of solemn majesty in its appearance, that bespeaks a noble origin, and leads the antiquary, while he contemplates its ruin, to regret that the particulars of its early history should be so much involved in uncertainty as they really are*. The present edifice, according

* Camden, Buck, and Grose, with other writers who have relied on their authority, affirm that "Kidwelly castle was built soon after the conquest by Maurice de Londres, one of the Norman knights who conquered Glamorganshire." There is a glaring error in this statement in the first instance. We have elsewhere seen that Maurice was not the knight sirnamed de Londres, who assisted Fitzhamon in that conquest, but his great-grandson, If, therefore, Kidwelly castle was built soon after the conquest of Glamorganshire, it could not have been by Maurice. To palliate this oversight, others, (presuming that it must have been erected at this time,) say, it was the work of William de Londres, who certainly did come over with Fitzhamon, and became in consequence the first Norman lord of Ogmore. The validity of the assertion then becomes questionable in another view, namely, on what authority is it at all said that Kidwelly castle was built by this first Norman lord of Ogmore, whether Maurice, or William? The lordship of Kidwelly with that of Carnewellion in Caermarthenshire, was won from the Welsh by William de Londres, as we are assured; but it may be more difficult to prove from authentic record that William built this castle

to

cording to Caradoc, was built in the year 1189, by Rhys, prince of South Wales, upon hearing of the death of his friend Henry the second, king of England, and the elevation of his son Richard Coeur de Lion, by the choice of the English nobles to the throne. The

to secure those conquests, even granting the probability of the circumstance. It is not unlikely that he established strong holds for his garrisons, but we cannot believe that he had either the time, or means to build such a stately fortress before he was disturbed, and even driven out of his newly acquired domains.—Caradoc relates, that immediately after the conquest, the Normans taking advantage of the confusion occasioned by the inroads of Cadogan ap Blethyn ap Confyn into the countries of Cardigan, and Pembroke, in consequence of the death of Rhys ap Theodore, prince of South Wales, who fell in the fatal battle of Rumney, turned their arms likewise against those countries, and began to fortify themselves in castles, and other strong places, and to inhabit the country upon the sea shore, which was not before in their possession.—Three years after the conquest, which happened in 1090, the Normans, not content with the territory they had acquired, determined to seize upon Gower, *Kidwelly*, and Ystrad Tywy; and in this they were successful, after so cruelly harassing that tract of country, as to leave it bare of inhabitants. But the Welsh were resolutely bent upon resisting this further extension of the Norman domains, they therefore rallied their scattered forces, returned, and compelled the Normans to leave those countries. William de Londres would not abandon his claim to the countries he had conquered in this event, although it is certain he could not maintain possession of them at that time, for Henry, duke of Lancaster, the seventh in descent from William, was stiled lord of Ogmore, Kidwelly, and Carnewilhion; and further, those lordships afterwards became a part of the duchy of Lancaster in consequence thereof. William de Londres, the

The Welsh traditionally believe, that it was the work of king John, while others say, that monarch only resided here occasionally, after Rhys had completed the building. In the reign of Henry the third, Llewelyn marched into Kidwelly, and seizing upon the castle, burnt it, and put the garrison to the sword.

the assumptive lord of Kidwelly had a castle in Gowćr, which he deserted, as Caradoc relates, but he makes no mention of any castle in Kidwelly. In the year 1149, Gryffydh ap Rhys, who was then possessed of Caermarthen, fortified the castle of that city, and then marching his army towards Kidwelly, wasted and destroyed the country, and returned home with great spoils; and here again not a word is said of any castle at Kidwelly, which it is natural to suppose the historians on so many occasions would not have neglected to mention, had there been any such an edifice. What seems to strengthen the conjecture, are the incidents of the year 1189, which Caradoc speaks of: in that year he tells us Rhys, prince of South Wales, upon hearing of the death of Henry the second, thought it high time to look to his own safety: lest the new king might become his enemy, he therefore seized upon the castles of St. Clear, Abercorran (or *Laugharne*) and Lanstephan, secured his treacherous disobedient son, Mælgon, in prison, and *built* the castle of Kidwelly. After this time Kidwelly castle is mentioned several times in the history of the Welsh princes.—If the foregoing remarks do not disprove the existence of a castle at Kidwelly before the year 1189, they serve at least to convince us the present building was erected at that time. Worrington speaks of Kidwelly being defended before that period against the combined forces of the English and Normans, in a pitched battle by Gwenllian, wife of Gryffydh ap Rhys, during the absence of her husband in North Wales; she fell in the action, and as some say, was beheaded after she was dead, by the ferocious Normans, who obtained, in this instance, a complete victory over the Welsh.

After this, it underwent repairs at the desire of Alice, wife to one of the dukes of Lancaster; and was again repaired for the reception of Henry the seventh. This monarch granted it, with other presents, to Sir Rhys ap Thomas, in recompence for the eminent services rendered him by that valiant knight, when he ascended to the throne. But Rhys Gryffydh, the grandson of Sir Rhys, falling into disgrace with the English court, this castle and lordship were forfeited and given to the Vaughans of Golden Grove: Richard Vaughan, the first possessor, was earl of Cárbery, lord president of Wales. It is pleasing to observe, that the ruins of this noble castle are carefully preserved at this time from every species of wanton depredation. The principal front faces the south west, where there is a magnificent gateway between two round towers of an aspiring height. One circumstance, indeed, detracts from the portly demeanour of its aspect, and this is a miserable little shed, an object in itself contemptible, but appearing doubly

doubly so in such a situation, that is allowed to remain patched up directly against the entrance at the bottom of this noble gateway. —A person in the town keeps the key of a small door in the back part of the castle, through which strangers desirous of inspecting the interior, are admitted. Entering the court yard we were surprised to find the building far more perfect than our ideas had led us to conceive. The form of the building is easily defined; the ground plan is nearly a quadrangle, with four round towers, one at each corner, beside others of a smaller size with which the walls are strengthened. Certain rooms within the principal towers still retain their arched roofs of stone, to all appearance as complete as when first constructed: even the staircases leading to them are not very greatly injured. We were conducted into the lowest apartment in one of the towers, called the mint, where it is affirmed by the natives of the place, king John had his money coined while he resided in princely state within the

castle. They go so far as to say, that many coins of that monarch have been found at different times among the dirt accumulated in the bottom of this tower. On one side of the area is the ruin of a square building of small dimensions, divided formerly into three stories, the upper floor of which is believed to have been the chapel of the castle. The kitchen, a brewery, and other similar apartments, are likewise pointed out to strangers.

The prospects over the adjacent country, surveyed from the battlements of the castle, are uncommonly fine: we saw them under their most enchanting colours, as the sun was rising over the eastern hills. Directly at the foot of the castle mount flows the river *Gwendraeth Vach*, the meandering course of which the eye traces through a considerable extent of country. To the southward, in the distance, lies the sea.—On the opposite side of the river, the town of Kidwelly appears conspicuous: most of the houses have roofs of

of thatch, some are covered with slate, and a few in the English manner, with pantiles. The handsome stone bridge across the river gives it an air of respectability; the only feature in the town itself of any note is the lofty spire of the church.

The latter building did not escape a further inspection on our return to the town. There is, however, nothing here to claim remark, except the figure of the Virgin and infant Jesus over the entrance, with the motto *Hæc est Domus, Dei Porta Cœli.* Another memorial of the catholic age is the bonnitier for containing the holy water fixed against the wall under the door porch. This church is dedicated to our lady. There was a priory, a cell to the black monks of Sherburne in the new town near the church, in the sixteenth century.

We caught a distinct, but transitory view of the castle of Llanstephan, another edifice

of no mean celebrity, from the heights, as we directed our course towards the vale of Towey, in the road to Caermarthen, after leaving Kidwelly. This hostile building stands upon the summit of a steep rock that projects into the sea at the entrance of the Towey, which this position entirely commands. The erection of this castle is attributed to the sons of Uchthed, prince of Merionethshire, prior to the year 1138. Like other Welsh buildings of this nature, Lanstephan castle has experienced many vicissitudes, and is at last reduced to ruin.

CHAP. XV.

Ride down the vale of Towey.—Caermarthen. Sir Richard Steele:—Anecdotes relative to the latter part of his life:—Visit to St. Peter's church, the burial place of Sir Richara.—Monument of Sir Rhys ap Thomas in the chancel;—the eventful history of this knight.—Dilapidated tomb of Sir Rhys ap Pedoulau.—Ruin of the old priory on the bank of the river:—lead and tin works.—Fire balls, an œconomical kind of fuel.—Aberguilly village:—palace.—Fine prospects from the hills above Aberguilly.—Merlin's hill.—Road to Landilo Vawr.—Dryslyn castle.—Newton park, and Dinevawr castle.—Return by Langunnor hill:—deserted lead mines, altars, coins, and various other memorials of the Roman age.—The origin of Caermarthen considered.

THE eye wanders with an emotion of infinite delight across a charming extent of

country, as our road winds down the hill towards the vale of Towey, in the midst of which the city of Caermarthen stands embosomed. Fancy had not anticipated too much from the imperfect glimpse the summit of those hills afforded of it. The vale unfolds a prospect of unrivalled beauty, placid, open, lovely, and luxuriant: combining the milder attributes of landscape with an air of dignity, and features of magnificence. Such a scene might inspire the muse to a bolder flight of energetic diction; sure, we may exclaim,

> " some rural deity
> Presiding, scatters o'er the unequal lawns
> In beauteous wildness, yon fair-spreading trees,
> And mingling woods, and waters, hills, and dales,
> And herds, and bleating flocks." — —
> — — — — — — —
> — — — " Yes, some sylvan god
> Spreads wide the varied prospect; waves the woods,
> Lifts the proud hills; and clears the silver stream."

Caermarthen city, a small one truly, considered as the capital of South Wales, rises upon the ascent of a gradual eminence, at the foot of which rolls the full flowing stream of the

the silver Towey, a river that may be observed for miles from the hills we just descended; for after passing Caermarthen, it waves its course through a fine open country to the southward, which it fertilizes, and enlivens in a peculiar manner, till its waters fall into the Bristol channel, about ten miles distant.

Approaching nearer to the city, the river takes a more decided character: two or three large merchantmen lying in readiness to receive or unlade their cargoes, others, with swelling sails, driving up the port, and the number of warehouses along the quay, convince us the local advantages of this city for commercial purposes, are not altogether neglected.—An old stone bridge of five arches, besides half a dozen lateral openings for the passage of the water when the banks are overflowed, conducts across this river. This will serve to convey some idea of the Towey as it flows up to Caermarthen. From the entrance of the river at Llanstephan to the quay, the depth of

of water is considerable; we are told that ships of two hundred and fifty ton burthen can come up with ease. Nothing impedes the sailing of the larger vessels, except some shallows in the bed of the river, which with careful pilots may be avoided: for those of a smaller size the passage is perfectly secure. Its trade is principally with London, Bristol, and Liverpool.

After a long continuance of rains, or more frequently during the winter season, when the floods have become augmented suddenly by the auxillary streams of melting snow, poured down from the distant hills in the interior, the Towey has been known to rise, and inundate the country adjacent to Caermarthen, in an alarming manner. At times even the passage across the bridge has proved unsafe: there are instances of persons having been swept over the battlements by the force of the current, and drowned in the presence of the astonished spectators ashore, without the possibility of

receivin

receiving timely assistance to prevent the melancholy catastrophe. A long range of posts are placed along the road leading to the foot of the bridge on the east side of the river, for the direction of the traveller when the river is overflowed.

A plain, unassuming tower points out the situation of the only church in Caermarthen, a building dedicated to St. Peter. The ivied remnant of its ancient castle rises more conspicuous upon the summit of a steep, and rather craggy precipice, in front near the bridge. Very little of the old fortress remains *. For years past the felons of the

* From an old print by John Speede, published in 1662, the castle of Caermarthen appears to have been about that time, (or perhaps before the civil wars just preceding,) a fortress of great strength. The ground plan was nearly quadrangular, and from its aspect and position, it seems to have risen on the scite of a Roman encampment. Each of the four corners were protected by a tower, of which that at the east and west extremity were circular, and the others square. The intermediate wall was strengthened farther, in the middle, by a semicircular bastion, except in the front, which faced the north west: here it was guarded by an advanced work, a lofty tower and gateway: the citadel, and other strong buildings, lay on the side nearest to this entrance.

county

county were confined within its walls, but of late it has suffered considerable demolition, and a new jail has risen on the spot. The latter is a handsome building, begun in 1789, and finished in 1792.

Travellers in general are too fastiduous in their comments upon the buildings of Caermarthen. They regret so many good houses are promiscuously huddled together with the meanest buildings in every street, without more attention to the respectability of appearance. This remark is not more applicable in my mind to Caermarthen than any other town in Wales, where the symmetry of whole streets are not quite so frequently consulted as the convenience of the builders. In the metropolis, or opulent towns, and cities, wealthy speculators may indulge their vanity in such arrangements, but in a place like Caermarthen this ought not to be expected. Neither are its streets so remarkable for uncleanliness as report represents; if there are towns in Wales

kept

kept in better order in this respect, there are also others far more filthy.

A complaint more just than the foregoing, is the want of internal manufactories for the employment of the lower orders of society, whose condition is far from comfortable, at the same time that the heavy pressure of the poor rates for their support are severely felt by the middling classes. Formerly the lead and iron works of lord Cawdor, at the old priory, engaged a number of hands, but these ceased early in the last war, and have not been resumed since. A tin work at a small distance further down the river is the only manufactory of the place worth mentioning.

There is a certain share of celebrity attached to the city of Caermarthen, for having been during a period of some years, the retreat of that eminent literary character, Sir Richard Steele, once the friend of Swift and Addison, and editor of the Spectator.

Towards

Towards the close of an active life, devoted chiefly to his voluminous periodical concerns, and the services of the dramatic muse, he was compelled to retire, in no very easy circumstances, to a small estate in the vale of Towey, he had before acquired by his marriage with a lady of the Scurlock family. Here he fondly conceived his troubles would cease. In this retirement he hoped to be enabled to collect together the wreck of his scattered fortune, relieve himself from the pecuniary embarrassments in which he had been involved by his indiscretions in the metropolis, and by pursuing a more judicious management, and the aid of his splendid literary talents, he thought it possible once more to rise superior to every difficulty, and spend the remainder of his life in a manner suitable to the rank he had before supported in society. But man is not *sole arbiter* of his own affairs; and one misfortune which, by the intervention of human prudence may be overcome, is oftentimes the prelude to others that are unconquer-

conquerable. Even so alas! it befel poor Steele: ere he could extricate himself from the pressure of his first difficulties, a severe paralytic stroke impaired his mental faculties, and at once deprived him of every resource he had anticipated from the exertion of his literary abilities. After this he found means to support himself with the scanty residue of his property for some years, but he was now bending under the accumulated evils of affliction, and had degenerated into a lamentable state of idiocy, from which he was at last released only in the arms of death.

Thus terminated the career of Steele, one of the brightest luminaries of the eighteenth century: a man respected, caressed in the days of his prosperity, flattered by the unanimous voice of public praise: admired by all;—and yet at last deserted!—But although such was precisely the truth: though his fortune, like his talents, were in the wane in his declining years, the biographers of Steele are uniformly

uniformly incorrect in stating one particular: Sir Richard did not die in abject poverty, a reproach to that country which had never withheld from him the empty recompence of popular approbation; Providence ordained it otherwise. His income, though small, proved sufficient to support him in his infirmities, above the sufferings of common indigence. He had a decent farm in the vale of Towey, within a quarter of a mile from Caermarthen. To this day the house he inhabited remains. It is known by the Cambrian appellation of *Ty Gwyn*, or the white house; and there it is pretty certain he wrote the Conscious Lovers, with some other pieces that fix the standard of his reputation in the annals of dramatic fame.

In his latter years Sir Richard could afford to keep two men servants to carry him about the town in his open chair. He was still fond of plays, but his chief delights were more congenial with the unfortunate imbecility of his mental faculties; he was never

YR GWYLF
The Farm of Sir Richard Steele *in the*
VALE *of* TOWEY.

London. Published as the Act directs by T. Donaldson May 1. 1801.

never better pleased, for instance, than in assembling together a party of boys, to divert himself with observing their amusements. When the streets were very dirty, he would reward them for this pleasure by throwing a parcel of halfpence (which he carried on such occasions in his hat before him) into the deepest part of the mud, that he might see them scramble and bemire themselves in picking them up.—How unworthy this of so great a man, sinking with honour to the last verge of mortality, and by such sports of dotage exposing himself to the contempt of a babbling world!

Steele lived to an advanced age: he expired in Caermarthen on the 21st of September, 1729. We may reasonably presume, that before his death he must have acquired some considerable accession to his property, because it is traditionally well known to the inhabitants of this city, that his remains were conveyed with great pomp from the house in which he died to the church for interment. To encrease the

solemn grandeur of the ceremony, it was performed at night, and no less than four and twenty attendants, each carrying a branch of lighted torches, formed part of the retinue in the funeral parade. The house in which he drew his latest breath was also his own, and is still standing, being the same that was afterwards converted into an inn, well known to travellers by the sign of the Ivy bush, till within the last three or four years, when that name was transferred by Mr. Norton, the occupier, to another far more commodious, near the bank of the Towey river.

Strangers unacquainted with these circumstances attending the latter part of his life, have reflected with asperity on the citizens of Caermarthen, for their deficiency of taste, because no monument has been erected to the memory of this neglected genius. But this is uncandid, because it is unmerited. Poor Steele was never unconscious of the importance he had acquired in the scale of literary eminence.

eminence. A degree of egotism, which we must be disposed to pardon, in his second childhood, pervaded that mind once dignified by nobler sentiments. "Let no stone," said he, when dying, "record the memory of one whose labours entitle him to more lasting fame; my name will be remembered by posterity,"—and this injunction was obeyed.—Feeble resolution: how much more nobly spoke the great Frontinus with his latest breath, when solicited by his friends to give instructions for his monument: "*Impensa monumenti supervacua est. Memôria nostri durabit, si vitâ meruimus.*"—Steele, pursuant to his own desire, was buried in the family vault of the Scurlocks, on the south side of the church; not beneath a plain uninscribed stone, as some hasty tourists acquaint us, but under one that bears an epitaph in the following words:

Here also * lyeth the
Body of John Scurlock of
Blaen Corse Esquire Alderman
Of this Corporation, only
Brother to the aforesaid

* Alluding to those mentioned in the large mural monument above.

Jonathan Scurlock who
departed this life the 22
day of October, in the year
of our Lord 1715. Aged 47
years.

And immediately above it, against the wall, stands a large handsome monument, inscribed to other branches of the same family, among whom the name of Steele is not mentioned.—Should the city of Caermarthen, erect a monument to the man, it could be only to bear testimony of their high regard for him; and it may be asked, with Steele,

———" Of what avail
Are pyramids, and mottoed stones,
And monumental trophies."

His memory would outlive such a frail memorial of their esteem, and they could neither record his virtues, nor his indiscretions, with more becoming truth than the pen of candour, which thus transmits them to futurity.

" Sir Richard was a man of undissembled and extensive benevolence, a friend to the friend-

friendless, and as far as his circumstances would permit, the father of every orphan. His works are chaste and manly. He was a stranger to the most distant appearance of envy or malevolence; never jealous of any man's growing reputation; and so far from arrogating any praise to himself from his conjunction with Mr. Addison, that he was the first who desired him to distinguish his papers. His greatest error was want of economy: however, he was certainly the most agreeable, and (if we may be allowed the expression) the most innocent rake that ever trod the rounds of dissipation."

St. Peter's church, to which our curiosity had directed us in search of the burial place of Steele, contains the monuments of other persons who also deserve to be remembered with respect. The most distinguished of those is that of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, the Cambrian hero who so nobly assisted the duke of Richmond, to hurl the tyrant Richard

he third from the throne of England. He met Richmond at Milford Haven, accompanied him with all his forces, which included a powerful body of cavalry, to Bosworth field, and in the hour of conflict proved himself worthy the epithet a favourite bard * has complimented him with,—"*the shield and buckler of his country.*"—The Welsh maintain that he slew Richard with his own hands: that he plucked the regal diadem from his brow, and hastened to place it on the head of Richmond, ere the shouts of victory had proclaimed him king. Certain it is, that Rhys, in reward for his eminent services, was the first person knighted in the field of battle by Richmond, now Henry the seventh. Many honours were afterwards conferred upon him, likewise, by this sovereign. He became constable and lieutenant of Brecknock, chamberlain of Caermarthen, and Cardigan, Seneschall and chancellor of Haverford west,

* Tudur Aled.

Rouse,

Rouse, and Buelt, justiciary of South Wales, and governor of all Wales, knight banneret, and knight of the garter, and one of the privy counsellors. Besides all this, he was offered the choice of an earldom, either of Pembroke or Essex, that he might be himself ennobled, and transmit it to posterity. But to this he answered stoutly, that his "profession was arms, and the greatest honour that could be conferred upon a soldier, was knighthood: as for his son, or his son's son, and the rest of their posterity, if they were ambitious of advancement, his desire was, that for their greater glory, they should sweat for it as he had done."

When we see this brave disinterested soldier adventuring his life and fortune to serve the cause of Henry the seventh, the heart recoils at the base ingratitude of his successor Henry the eighth towards the posterity of a man, through whose means alone, it may be literally said, he was elevated to the throne of England. Upon

the most frivolous pretext imaginable, this worthless monarch caused Rhys Gryffith, the grandson of Sir Rhys, to be attainted of high treason, of which he was convicted, and being executed as a traitor, his immense possessions were alienated to the crown. This accusation was founded on a supposed conspiracy to depose Henry the eighth, and place James the fifth, king of Scotland, on the throne instead. Rice, about this time, thought proper to resume the old surname of Fitzurien, which had been in the family a thousand years before. This alone was construed into an intent to seize upon the principality of Wales. The assistance to be derived from Rice by the scottish king, could be only proved by the concurrence of a pretended prophecy, which declared, that James of Scotland, with the red hand, together with the raven, should conquer England. The crest of Rice being the raven, no doubt remained that he was guilty, and he was condemned accordingly. Upon the restoration of Charles the second,

second, the honour of knighthood was restored to the family, with a trifling part of the estates, being all remaining at that time in the power of the crown.—The lineal descendants of Sir Rhys, however, have now the honours of peerage, under the title of lord of Dinevawr.

His monument, which is of the altar kind, and very large, occupies a conspicuous station on the left side of the chancel, and is still in a tolerable state of preservation. Sir Rhys, we are told, was buried in the White Friars, or Priory, a building at a distance from the church, where the remains of other pesons of distinction had been interred, but the priory falling into decay, after the dissolution, this monument was removed from thence, and placed in the situation where it now stands. Whether the coffin was brought likewise, is very doubtful: it is traditionally believed, that on being taken up, it was found empty. Some say the body was allowed

allowed to remain in its repository, only the monument being removed for safety to the church; while others again affirm, that his coffin was discovered a few years back in digging a grave in the chancel. It is the firm persuasion of Mr. Barker, the worthy clergyman of the place, that nothing more than the monument of Sir Rhys was brought hither from the priory; and that the coffin found in the chancel, as before intimated, must be that of the earl of Essex, father of the unfortunate favourite of queen Elizabeth, who was taken ill and died on his way to Ireland, upon his appointment to the office of lord lieutenant for that country *.

* This antique coffin was discovered several years ago by the sexton who still officiates, in digging a grave of considerable depth for one of the Rice family, who had desired to be interred here. The outer coffin, which was of oak, appears to have been of very singular construction: it was somewhat cymbiform, pointed at both extremities, and strongly bound with hoops of iron. The inner shell was lead, in which the body lay embalmed in a peculiar sort of spirituous liquor, that had retained its purity in an astonishing manner, and was scarcely at all diminished in quantity since the time the body was enclosed in it, the coffin being nearly full when first opened.

Sir

Sir Rhys is represented by a whole length figure, lying upon the monument, with his lady on the left side. He appears in the full dress of a warrior of his time, a suit of plate armour, with his robes, the insignia of knighthood, and order of the garter. His shield emblazoned with his arms, (a *chevron* between three black birds, or ravens,) lie at his head, in an easy posture, upon a lion's skin, the four paws of which are quartered, and upon which his helmet reclines above the shield. On the mantle over his left breast, is another armorial bearing, a cross upon a plain field, perhaps designed for the "*shield argent, with a cross patonce sable,*" the arms borne by the Rice or Rhys family; their crest, the *raven*, is clearly depicted on an appendage suspended from the girdle. A small dagger appears upon the right side, on the other is the remains of a large sword. The whole figure, together with that of his lady, and indeed the rest of the monument, has been richly ornamented with colours. The pale blue,

blue, intended for the plate armour, is perfectly visible, and so likewise is the black, and gilding, the latter especially on the chain work of the armour round the middle *.

Till very lately another curious monument was preserved in the chancel near that above-mentioned, which, according to the vulgar opinion, was intended to commemorate *Owen* y Pedoulau. This also was of the altar kind, with the figure of a warrior, having his arms placed in a supplicating posture, as usual, on his breast, but holding in both his clenched hands a large horse shoe, as if in the act of breaking it asunder in the middle. This is

* I have been thus minute in the description of the above-mentioned monument, because no writer that I can find has spoken of it in terms of accuracy. It is to be regretted, that modern tour writers too frequently describe upon the authority of others, what they have not themselves examined, and thus it happens, that one unfortunate mistake becomes confirmed by the tale and testimony of subsequent tourists. What can be more incorrect, for instance, than the assurance so often repeated of the mutilated condition of this monument? They tell us, "there is not even the trace of an inscription; and that so perishable was the stone of which the fabric was composed, that nothing can be made out but the armorial bearings of the family, and the garter round the arms."

supposed,

supposed, with a greater degree of probability, to have been intended for Howel ap Pedoulau, than for Owen; the former of whom, we are told by the Welsh records, was foster brother to king Edward the second, Sir Howel's mother having been the young prince's nurse, and that he was so strong as to be able to break, or straighten horse-shoes with his bare hands. We may easily perceive in what manner he came in after-times to be called Owen instead of Howel; his posterity assumed the surname of Owen, and being recognized as the great ancestor of that family, the transition is readily accounted for. The whole of this monument, which was of fine gypsum, was destroyed fourteen years ago by the workmen employed to repair the church. According to the condition of their engagement, they were to provide materials for the cornice work, and finding the stone of this monument reduced to plaister, would perfectly well suit the purpose, the villains actually broke it up to save themselves expense;

expense; nor were they detected till nearly every fragment of it was demolished.

Mural tablets, and other monuments, both in the chancel and along the ailes, are numerous. One in the chancel against the wall, above the monument of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, caught our notice, as being very lately placed here. This is inscribed to John Lloyd, esq. of Alltyrodin, who had been mayor of the city of Caermarthen in 1780: he died on the twenty-third of March, 1803, at the age of 52: the inscription concludes with the following striking couplet:

> "Peaceful sleep out the sabbath of the tomb,
> And wake to raptures in a life to come."

The interior of the church has been recently fitted up in a style of uncommon neatness; the seats, in particular, are disposed in the same manner as those of Mary's Redcliff, Bristol. In point of taste, the decorations are altogether superior to any thing of the kind to be observed in other churches, either

of

of South, or North Wales, some few of the cathedral churches alone excepted.

Our next object was the remains of the old priory, one wing of which, including a handsome gate-way, is yet standing*: some few of the apartments are inhabited by poor people, who have converted the remainder into cart-houses, pig-sties, and other such receptacles.

The ruins of the priory church adjacent were considerable, till within a few years past, when the ground on which they stood became the property of lord Cawdor, who ordered the ruins to be demolished, and the area of the church dug up for the convenience of

* This wing of the building, with the gateway, is represented by Speede in an old print, published in 1662. According to his ground plan, this appears to have been the only entrance: it conducted into a very spacious quadrangle, near the middle of which, towards the further end, stood the priory. The quadrangular area was inclosed on all sides by walls.—There are still remains of carved work in stone above the gateway, ornamented with the red, and white rose, the distinction of the two houses of York and Lancaster.

establish-

establishing a lead work upon the spot. Pits were therefore dug, furnaces erected, and rail roads constructed upon the scite of the old church. For a time the works were carried on with much activity, but during the last war they were discontinued, and have not been since resumed. At this time there is no smelting work for this metal in Caermarthen, neither could we learn that any lead mine is at present worked in this neighbourhood, as formerly. There are convincing proofs of the existence of lead in Langunnor hill, on the opposite side of the vale, in places that appear to have been worked at the time the Romans were stationed in this part of the country, and probably not since that period. The ore of lead smelted at this place, till lately, was brought from Lampeter, the vicinity of Landovery, and other mines in Cardiganshire, and the upper parts of Caermarthenshire.

At a small distance to the eastward of those deserted premises, are the tin works of Mr. Morgan.

The

The iron ore employed in this manufactory is the common argillaceous kind, of South Wales, intermixed with a considerable portion of the Ulverston ore of Lancashire, a rich *hematite*, the latter, which it is deemed necessary to smelt with the other sort, in order to produce a metal of such pliability as the iron plates designed for tinning require.

These ores are reduced to a state of fusion together, by the means of charcoal, a fuel far superior for this purpose to the coke of sea-coal, every impurity in the metal being destroyed, or expelled, by its assistance. The machinery of the smelting work is on the old construction, a large double pair of bellows, worked by a common water wheel, being found to possess all the powers requisite to keep the blast upon the charcoal while the ores are smelting.

After the iron passes through the finery, and is cast in moulds into the form of pigs,

it is beaten into long flat bars by the repeated strokes of a ponderous hammer, kept in motion upon the anvil by water; and after this, the bars are cut into pieces of about ten inches in length, by the aid of shears, kept also in motion by the force of the stream. The dissevered pieces are next conveyed to a furnace, and when thoroughly heated, are passed between the two massive cylinders of a flatting mill, such as we had before observed at Taybach for reducing the bars of copper into plates. The piece of iron, at the first pressure, extends in length, and width: the adjusting skrews are turned still closer, and at the second pressure, the superficial dimensions of the iron are encreased considerably again. When the plate by this process becomes twice the size that plates of tin are in common, it is replaced in the furnace till it assumes a fiery red appearance: the forgemen then withdraw it, and, by a brisk turn with their tongs, folds it directly across the middle, passes it between the cylinders, and repeats

repeats the operation till the folded plate appears of the same length and breadth as it appeared before it was doubled. Being again heated, bent, and submitted to a comparatively slight compression of the cylinders for a third time, to press the whole together compactly, the edges are clipped with shears, and the plates, sixteen in number, are torn asunder, these adhering slightly by their surfaces to each other. A larger number of plates may be made of the same quantity of iron, by folding and passing them between the cylinders again, the thickness of each individually diminishing, of course, in proportion to the greater number of plates into which they are divided.

The trimmings or cuttings from the plates, to reduce them to the size required, are laid aside for the founderies, where they are converted into bolts for ship building. The plates, when separated, pass through another kind of rolling press, the whole machinery,

of which is adjusted with such accurate precision, that the slightest wrinkle, or contortion in the plate, will impede their passage between the cylinders, and in that case they are condemned as useless. On the contrary, those which do pass through, appear with a surface perfectly smooth and polished, and are then conveyed to another part of the works where they receive the tinning.—Here the stranger, should the strength of his nerves enable him to endure with the most nauseous stench imaginable, may trace the further progress of this kind of manufacture. Preparatory to tinning, the plates are steeped for a certain length of time in a weak corrosive liquor, or nitrous acid; after which they are taken out, and rubbed, or well scoured and cleansed from the slightest impurity of rust with bran, and are then carried to the crucibles for dipping into the melted tin.—This useful metal is not the product of this country, but is imported hither in blocks of a convenient size, ready purified, and fit for use from the

the stannaries of Cornwall. The crucibles are of a rectangular form, and pretty deep, to admit the block of tin which is to be melted, and kept in a fluid state by means of a moderately brisk charcoal fire under the crucible. To prevent the calcination of the tin, as well as to prepare the iron plate to receive the tinning kindly, the liquid tin is kept floating in an oil, either that of linseed, or one prepared on purpose from broiling suet. The plate is taken by one corner with a pair of forceps, immersed vertically into the tin, and upon being withdrawn, its dingy surface on both sides is found changed in a moment to a beautiful silvery white. A second, and third, dip into the tin, is required for what is called *single tin:* double tin demands a repetition of the process, or six times dipping, and in certain cases much more. This is the last process, the plates being afterwards only cleansed with bran, sorted, and packed up in boxes for exportation.

Those works employ a number of persons,

girls and women, as well as men: the latter are engaged in the various laborious departments of smelting, milling the plates, and tinning; the females in preparing them to receive the tin, or in cleansing them afterwards with bran.

As we walked down the vale, the promising appearance of many thriving patches of young trees, which seem from their situation to be too much exposed to the depredations of the labouring poor, attracted particular attention. The reason these are not molested, was afterwards explained: there is an act of parliament for the preservation of these rising plantations, the regulations of which are judiciously enforced, and in order that no one convicted may plead their ignorance of them, the several clauses, together with the penalties annexed to each offence, are painted conspicuously on a board erected upon the terrace below the town. This has fortunately been attended with the most salutary effect, the timber in this

this early state is not destroyed as in other parts of the country for the sake of fuel, but flourishes, and may one day become highly valuable.

This restriction is not considered as any hardship upon the poorer classes, since the *fire balls*, the principal kind of fuel in use upon the spot, is both cheap and abundant. At the door of a cottage near the town, we observed the process of making up these balls for use. A boy was employed in beating a heap of clay, and culm, or dust of small coal with a spade, occasionally tempering the mass with water, till it acquired the consistency of common mortar; a stout barefooted wench at the same time riddling the culm through a wire seive, for the purpose of preparing a further quantity of this bituminous matter to be mixed with another portion of the clay. Dust-coal, or culm, is brought to Caermarthen in barrels, and sold at about the average price of four-pence a bushel: in this state it

is unfit for any domestic purpose, but when intermixed in the manner above-mentioned, formed into balls, and dried, they make a fine, clear, lasting fire: emit a strong heat: and smoke much less than common sea coal. There is a fine clay of an ochraceous colour, very plentiful in Pembrokeshire, that is preferred for this purpose: this has a smooth, unctuous surface, moistens easily, and then becomes tenaceous, soils the fingers, and appears when dry to contain specks of white *mica*. The people of Caermarthen cannot often procure this clay; in lieu of it they therefore take that which is produced on the banks of the Towey river: there are persons in the town who bring this clay from the river side to the doors of the inhabitants, for one penny per bushel, and who will take the trouble, if the coal be provided for them, to attemper a bushel of it, and form it into balls for an additional halfpenny.

Winding along the vale of Towey to the eastward,

eastward, in another excursion, our walk conducted us across the meadows, till the pathway emerged into the turnpike road within some short distance of Aberguilly. Being saturday our progress was retarded by the multitude of country people flocking from miles distant to the weekly market held in the city; some with carts of grain, or hay; other conveying their little stock of poultry, butter, eggs, &c. saddles, ropes, beaver hats, household utensils, and a variety of other articles of the same description. One circumstance did not escape us, from the meanest to the most respectable, both men and women, with scarcely any exception, were mounted on their horses: and the straggling few, who, like ourselves, were perambulating the road on foot, were not often greeted with the smile of complacency by their neighbours. There is a certain little pride about the peasantry of Wales in this respect, which they conceive entitles them to consideration, for they never fail to associate the idea of abject poverty, with the condition of

of those who proceed far on the public roads on foot, or, as they would say, if speaking of their neighbours, "who can't afford to keep a filly."

Except the palace belonging to the bishop of St. David, the only one now standing of the seven palaces attached to the See of ancient Menevia, there is no object to detain the traveller in passing through Aberguilly. We took a hasty view of the church, a plain building, divided in the interior by a colonnade of arches that are slightly pointed, and supported by thick octagonal pillars. Against the east end of the church wall, in the burying ground, is a plain memorial of Adam Ottley, who, as the concise inscription in latin informs us, was bishop of St. David's, and died on the fourth of October, 1723, aged 70: in 1785 this was re-edified, at the expense of Thomas Ottley, esq. of Pitchford, in the county of Salop.

Beyond the village, we ascended a singular protuberant

protuberant hill that opportunely rose before us, and seemed to promise, from its exalted pinnacle, a variety of delicious prospects. The country, we had conceived, must appear arrayed in all its grandeur from this spot, nor were we mistaken, they are uncommonly fine; but after a tedious ascent, we had still the mortification to perceive, that we were much below the summit of another hill, that diminished, in a great degree, the extent of horizon anticipated. Fortunately, it does not impede the prospect directly along the vale, which stretches itself for miles before the eye of the spectator. The *tout ensemble* of this vale is enchanting: an immensely extensive tract of land, smiling in all the pride of culture: its meads enlivened with every tint of verdure, the grass, the bending corn, gently ruffled by the breeze: trees, partaking of every sportive form, skirting the valley in patches; climbing the slopes, or waving high upon the acclivities: the winding course of the Towey, diffusing fertility and beauty in its progress,

and

and conveying its silvery undulations to the remotest part of the vale the eye can penetrate; these are the features of the scenery unveiled before us to awaken admiration. The enthusiast in natures landscape, would discriminate a thousand other charms, of which words can afford no accurate conception.—Such is the appearance of the valley to the eastward.

In the retrospect the spectator glances over a luxuriant sweep of country, partaking of a character somewhat different: more limited in extent, but not less interesting on that account.

On the other side of the river which flows at the foot of the hill we had ascended, stands Aberguilly palace, a building newly beautified in a style, we thought, extremely appropriate: elegance is not neglected in its embellishments, but at the same time an air of chastity pervades the whole, that appears well suited for the pur-

pose-

pose of its design, as an ecclesiastic palace. The grounds, which also cover a wide extent of inclosure, is laid out with taste.—Langunnor hill is a striking object from this spot. This eminence rises boldly on one side of the vale, at a moderate distance beyond the palace: its beautiful mantling of trees, with the church just below the summit, render its appearance very remarkable. Beyond this, on both sides of the vale, a range of wooded hills extend in endless perspective, in which the city of Caermarthen just emerges on the view in the distance of this lengthened scene.

The route after leaving Aberguilly, along the vale to Llandilo vawr, is deservedly admired. We pass the ruins of Dryslan castle, stationed close to the river, a few miles on the road beyond Caermarthen. Newton park, the seat of lord Dinevawr, occurs before we enter Llandilo.

——"The woody hills of Dynevowre"

are celebrated by the pen of Spenser: here he feigned that Merlin

"went

——"went"——

"To make his wonne, low underneath the ground,
In a dark delve far from the view of day,
That of no living wight he mote be found,
When so he counsell'd with his sprights encompass'd round."

But notwithstanding the testimony of the poet, we are inclined to seek—"the hideous hollow cave,"—"and baleful bower," the region of his midnight incantations in a spot much nearer to Caermarthen. There is a lofty eminence within sight of the city, called by the Welsh *Allt Fyrthyn*, *Allt Merddin*, or the hill of Merlin, that caught our observation as we retraced our journey back towards Aberguilly, and which, upon traditional evidence, disputes the palm with his authority. This lies to the eastward of the hill we had been at the pains of ascending before. The cluster of trees upon this eminence, was pointed out to us by a shepherd's boy, under the title of Merlin's grove, and a cavity he mentioned on one side, of course by that of Merlin's cave.—Subsequent enquiry has confirmed the truth of the boy's assertion. The people of Caermarthen

VALE OF TOWEY.

Langunnor Hill . Allt Fyrddyn or Merlin's Hill

Allt vawr.

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Caermarthen entertain this notion respecting *Allt Fyrthyn.*

The immediate vicinity of this tract, we must remember to have been the principal theatre of many principal transactions in the life of Merlin. Caermarthen was his reputed birth-place, a circumstance that some have thought of sufficient moment to impose a name upon the city, which they conceive was called in consequence, *Caer Merddin,* or the city of Merlin. They assert that he was the son of a vestal, begotten by a spirit, but how he acquired the name of Merddin; or by what name the place was known prior to that event, they do not inform us. Rather, therefore, than deviate from the plain evidence of British history, we will allow it to be more probable that this unadopted *incubus* might receive the name of the city that gave him birth, than impose one on it. Three centuries before the time of Merlin, the Roman station of Caermarthen was called *Maridunum.* Whether this was the original Cambrian word,

word, latinized by the conquerors, or that the Welsh corrupted *Maridunum* to *Merddin*, is perhaps uncertain, but the similitude in both is striking, and at least affords a presumptive evidence that it bore the name of *Merddin*, and consequently Caer Merddin long before the birth of this hero *. Were we at liberty to advance conjectures on the etymology of Caermarthen, I should, for my own part conceive, that the original British name was *Caer Mor Dinas*, the city on the hill of the sea, pronounced abruptly *Caer Mor Din*, or *Caer Merddin*, which the Romans might call, in after times, *Castro Maridunum*. But I must confess I am not aware of any authority that will afford me countenance in this opinion.

Merlin Emrys, or Ambrosius, as he was called to distinguish him from Merlin Caledonius, another profound adept in magic, was esteemed the "Prince of British Seers." The

* "He was born in the town of Caermarthen, from whence he received the name of Merlin." *Caradoc. Powel.*

prophe-

prophecies of both were religiously observed, and consulted on momentous occasion with the utmost reverence by the ancient Britons, for they were persuaded no great event could happen, which their dark predictions did not foretel, and even when the result of facts proved contrary to the prophecies, and their interpretation, it was only evident they had not been rightly understood!

This distinguished character rose to eminence in one of the most eventful periods of British history, the time when *Gwythern*, or Vortigern, who appears to have been then the chief of the Cambrian princes, became unable, with all his exertions, to repel the encroachments of the Saxons upon the British territory.

Vortigern had previously invited the Saxons into Britain, to defend it against a host of Picts and Scots that had before assailed it, but the Saxons finding him to be a weak and pusillanimous prince, turned their arms themselves

against him. His people, harassed by repeated disasters in their contests with the Saxons, began seriously to attribute all the evils of their distressed condition, to the imprudence of their king in soliciting their alliance. Vortigern perceived the declining state of the British empire. He was intimidated by the murmurs of the people, and not less so by the rapid successes of the Saxons. The time, he foresaw, must arrive, when it would become necessary for him to fly for refuge to his strong holds to escape the fury of both. He therefore resolved, by the advice of his magician, to prepare a "last resort" for himself, amidst the wilds of the Snowdonian alps; where, in the depths of forests, protected by rocks and mountains, he might be able to conceal his guilty head, with a few of his faithful followers, till the storm of popular resentment was blown over. The valley of Nant Francon, a sequestered region, imbedded deeply amongst an almost inaccessible chain of mountains, seemed to offer the most secure retreat, and thither he accordingly determined to repair, if necessary. Policy dictated

tated to him the propriety of placing even this advantageous situation in a state of the utmost security. He began by attempting to build a castle, but this project failed. Through the intervention of some invisible agency, it is related, that the stones laid in the day time, were always carried away during the night. This unexpected prodigy struck the king's counsellors with astonishment. They agreed that magic could alone be counteracted by its own powers. The magicians were therefore convened, they consulted, and at length declared the work could not be carried on till the stones and mortar were sprinkled with the bloom of an unbegotten child, or *incubus*. To discover such a creature was a matter of deep concern, but however difficult, it must be found. Some time after, the emissaries of Vortigern passing along the streets of Caermarthen, heard a boy reproached by his playmates for an unbegotten knave: this was unfortunate for poor Merlin, the boy reproached, who was instantly seized upon, and carried

before king, as the proper object they had been in search of.

———" the messagers to Kermerdyn come
And you children bivore the yate pleyde hii toke gome,
Tho sede on to another, *Merlin* wut is thee
Thou faderlese ssrewe, my misdoustou me,
For icham of kinges icome, and thou nart worth a fille
For thou naddest never nanne fader, therefore hold the stille."

Vortigern ordered proper enquiry to be made concerning the particulars of his birth. His mother, who was a vestal, and been seduced by a Roman of distinction, finding it impossible to conceal her amour, declared

" he was not the son
Of mortal sire, or other living wight,
But wonderously begotten, and begun
By false allusion, of some guileful spright."
SPENCER.

Thus she saved her honour, and her life, in the first instance, nor did she swerve from the same story when brought before the king. The origin of the boy was no longer doubtful, and he was therefore doomed to die. Merlin, however, was to be heard before the fatal sentence was enforced. With becoming confidence

fidence he began by slighting the pretended skill of the magicians; he reasoned with them, and pointed out the true cause of their failure, in attempting to erect a castle upon a morass, into which the stones would naturally sink by their own weight. In confirmation of this, he besought the king that search might be made in the spot chosen for the building, and they should find a vast body of water concealed within the earth. This proved strictly true. He then declared that at the bottom of this water there were two sleeping dragons, which they likewise found on further search, one red, and the other white, the symbol, as he interpreted them, of the Britons and the Saxons. Upon this discovery the magicians were confounded by the superiority of his talents, and with one voice pronounced him, "the Prince of British Seers. *"

* It is in this ambiguous view the life of Merlin is introduced to our acquaintance by the page of British history: at that period a strange, and unconnected medley of fable, interspersed with certain traits of historic facts, upon which we may depend. When we reflect upon the obscurity of those times, 'ere yet the clear enlightening rays of philosophy had dawned upon the intellectual horizon of our untutored ancestors; while yet their minds were as little cultivated as the soil they trod, and the gloom of superstition enchained their reason within its

powers,

The prophecies of Merlin revived for awhile the declining fortune of the Britons. But the evil that Vortigern had long foreseen, at length occurred; he was compelled to fly to avoid the resentment of the people. For the greater security, he retired to the dreary, remote, promontory of Caernarvonshire, where he concealed himself, a solitary exile, for the

powers, how are we to feel surprised, or wherefore are we to express astonishment, at the inexplicable fables in which the true events attending the life of Merlin appear involved.

That such a man existed, we think certain: that he was possessed of extraordinary wisdom, is admitted; and the full exercise of his talents were called forth on a glorious occasion, to support the declining fortune of his country. But he was compelled to assume the guise and character of one deeply versed in the powers of magic to give due effect to his advice, the dictates of a sound judgement. This was perfectly congenial with the weak conceptions of the Britons, and of the times, for the Saxons dreaded more the invisible influence of his charms, than the armies opposed to them, while on the other hand, the Britons looking up to Merlin as to a tower of strength in the time of peril, fought bravely, under the assurance that in the end their exertions would not be vain. Many of his prophecies are yet on record. They relate chiefly to the future successes of the Britons over the Saxons, and the ultimate deliverance of the country from the yoke of its enemies. Owen Glyndwr found them highly instrumental in his favour when the Welsh rose to assist him against the English monarchy in the time of Henry the fourth. The invincible attachment of the Welsh to the prophecies of Merlin to this day is astonishing: there are thousands in the Principality even now, who are firmly persuaded, that sooner or later his prophecies must be accomplished.

rest

rest of his life, in the valley of *Gwythern*, so called after his name, and in which his burial place is shewn to this day *.

That the Romans were for a long term of years possessed of Caermarthen, is clearly understood. It only remains to speak of those memorials, and vestiges of their labour, which having escaped the destruction of time, are yet extant. To the worthy incumbent of St. Peter's church, we are in particular indebted for much local information on this subject. This gentleman kindly shewed me an inscribed stone, commemorative of the Roman republic, that was dug up with some others of a similar nature in the street near his house. Coins of the upper empire †, he tells me, are not very

* This appears, from many circumstances traditionally believed in the country, to be the fact. There are writers who affirm that he built a strong castle in the vale of Caermarthen, wherein himself and his incestuous daughter, with all his adherents, felt the signal justice of heaven for the calamities brought on their country by their crimes, the castle being struck by lightning, and the whole consumed together in the flames.

† Between the time of the Cæsars, and the year 260 of Christ, Roman coins of a later date than the beginning of the first period of the lower empire.

unfrequently discovered upon digging in his own garden, and in various other places about the city.

In Priory street we observed two small Roman altars, placed at the entrace to the fore-court of one of the houses: no inscription is visible on either, but a depression of the patella for the oblation is very obvious on the upper part of one of them. We walked over the scite of a Roman camp of large dimensions, close to the north side of the town; the ditches and embankments by which it was environed, are perfectly distinct, as is also one spot more elevated than the rest, the supposed station of the Roman general's tent. This bears the significant appellation of the *Bulwark-field.* There are similar vestiges of another Roman camp to the westward of the town. Traces of Roman mining work for lead are evident in Langunnor hill.

Such memorials of the Roman age as those above-

ROMAN ALTAR *in* CAERMARTHEN
and
AN ANCIENT BRITISH CROSS
at
CAREW PEMBROKESHIRE.

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above-mentioned, might be naturally expected, but what may in reality appear extraordinary, I am credibly informed, that in this part of Caermarthenshire there are many descendants of the Romans, who were stationed here between the first and fourth century of the Christian æra: they are acknowledged by the Welsh as such, bear Roman surnames, and though for the greater part, consisting of the meanest class of peasantry, pride themselves not a little above the Britons on their illustrious ancestry.—One circumstance I may be allowed to mention: about eight years ago the Rev. Mr. Barker, in his official capacity, granted a marriage license to Miss *Paulini*, of the parish of *Cûl y Cwm:* a family name we are not to recognize as one of Cambrian origin.—Neither shall we seek in vain at this day for a plebeian peasant, bearing the name of the great *Paulinus*, the leader of armies, the glorious supporter of Roman fame: who may proudly boast, his lineage, while toiling for subsistence at the miserable drudgery of

of a daily labourer.—The Welsh appear to entertain no very favourable opinion of the moral integrity of those descendants of the Romans.

Some time after the departure of the Romans, Caermarthen became a place of great consequence: upon the decline of the city of Caerleon, it began even to be considered as the capital of South Wales. At the death of Roderic the Great, in 876, when the Principality was divided into three kingdoms, and one assigned to each of his sons, Caermarthen was appointed the seat of empire for that of *Deheubarth*, or South Wales; a distinction it retained till it was removed by the reigning prince to his palace at Dinevawr. From this period till the twelfth century, we hear little of Caermarthen. It then became the theatre of dispute, and war, between the Normans, Flemings, English, and the native Welsh, and after experiencing many changes of

of fortune, was finally restored to a state of tranquillity in the reign of Edward the first.

Caermarthen was garrisoned by the English in 1113. Owen ap Caradoc, Rhytherch ap Theodore, and other leading men, being ordered to defend the castle for the king, it was agreed they should each take charge of it for a fortnight alternately. Gryffydh ap Rhys, who was at war with king Henry at this time, determined to attack the place, and having previously acquainted himself with its strength and condition, surprised and took possession of it in the night: killed Caradoc, whose turn it was at that time to guard the place, burnt the town, and greatly injured the castle. Between this period and the year 1138, the town was rebuilt, for no sooner had Owen Gwynedh succeeded to the Principality of North Wales, than he united his forces with those of his brothers, and making an expedition into South Wales, once more laid Caermarthen town in ashes.

Cadehl

Cadehl was in possession of the two castles of Caermarthen and Dinevawr, in 1149 and 1150. During the former year, he fortified Caermarthen castle, before he marched to destroy the country of Kidwelly, an excursion from which he returned with great booty. By some kind of compromise between Gryffydh ap Rhys, the father of the young warrior, and king Henry, the English and Normans became masters of Caermarthen in 1158, but Rhys, not being satisfied with the conduct of Henry, led an army into Pembrokeshire, and after destroying all the castles the Normans had fortified there, laid siege to Caermarthen. In the latter exploit he did not succeed, for Reynold, earl of Bristol, being informed of his movements, joined the earl of Clare, Cadwallader, Howel, and others, and marched with their combined forces to raise the siege. Rhys, who was as remarkable for his prudence as his courage, did not think proper to wait for them; he staid till they were on the march against him, and then deserting the place, retired with his men among the mountains.

A far

A far more remarkable æra of its history closes with the last struggle between Llewelyn and king Henry, in the year 1215, the former marching against Caermarthen, and after subduing the whole country, taking the castle in five days, and razing it to the ground. By this expression of the Welsh historians, antiquaries observe we are not to understand the entire demolition of the castles, which in the literal sense must be implied, since the leveling of the solid walls of an ancient castle, was not so easily to be effected by the means within the power of such conquerors: perhaps it only meant, that whatever was combustible was destroyed by fire, and the weaker parts of the building dilapidated, but not the main walls. This opinion is strengthened by what is further related of Caermarthen castle, for only three days after, we are told, Llewelyn augmented the garrison, and also that of Abertevi, to render them capable of withstanding the assaults of the English, should they direct their arms against them. He was, however, dispos-

dispossessed of both by the Flemings of Pembroke before the year 1222. During the absence of their earl, William Marshall, in Ireland, Llewelyn regained them, and putting the garrisons to the sword for the treacherous disobedience of their countrymen, who had sworn to be faithful to him, placed a strong garrison of his own men in each. The earl hearing of this, returned with a large army into Wales, and upon recovering those castles, treated the Welsh garrisons in the same manner; nor was he pacified with this; he resolved to punish the prince for his temerity, and therefore penetrated into the very heart of his country, laying it every where waste as he proceeded.

Llewelyn by this time began to be seriously alarmed at the rapid progress of the earl through his dominions: he perceived the necessity of opposing an immediate check to his fury, and with this view sent a considerable force, under the command of his son Gryffydh,

to

to meet him. The earl had just passed over the river when he came in sight of the enemy. The impatient Gryffydh immediately gave him battle. The ensuing contest was most dreadful, but neither was victorious, and night alone parted them. Matthew Paris, in contradiction to Caradoc, writes, that the earl obtained a signal victory, nine thousand of the Welsh being taken prisoners, or left dead upon the field.—The Welsh affirm, that their whole force did not exceed that number. Certain it is the Welsh remained masters of the field, while the earl recrossed the river in the dead of the night. Both armies remained for several days with only the river Towey between them, without either venturing to attack the other: till at last the Welsh becoming short of provisions, were obliged to retire.

The earl of Pembroke shortly after revolted from his obedience to Henry the third, king of England, and then again became the friend

of

of Llewelyn. In 1233 the earl assisted him, by besieging the castle of Caermarthen, then occupied by the English forces. But after three months spent before it in fruitless endeavours to reduce it, the English received a fresh supply of provisions by means of their fleets, which coming to the knowledge of the earl, he gave up his further designs against the place, and from that time it seems to have remained quietly in the hands of the English.

The church, with the new prison within the castle walls, and the town hall, are the only buildings of any note in Caermarthen. The latter is a handsome edifice, supported upon pillars.

Caermarthen market on the saturday makes a very respectable appearance: it is well supplied with cattle of all kinds, provisions, and wearing apparel, besides many other articles. A circumstance that attracted observation principally, was the abundance of cockles exposed for sale in this place: these seem to constitute

constitute a favourite article of food among the poorer classes of the Welsh, they are brought to market in sacks, ready boiled, and picked out of the shell, and in this state are sold by measure at a very low price.

CHAP. XVI.

St. Clear's, or Clare's.—River Corran.—Coracle fishing:—structure of this ancient kind of British bark;—and reflections naturally excited.—The green bridge of Wales.—Marras.—New inn, the boundary between the two counties of Caermarthen, and Pembroke.—Pendine.—Extensive sands of Laugharn.—Testaceological, and other natural products, &c.—Laugharn town:—castle.—Return to St. Clear's.—Scite of the old castle of that name,—Church.—Monuments.—Roman antiquities.

A BRISK posting business in the summer upon the Narberth road, supports a tolerable house of public entertainment in the obscure village of St. Clear's, nine miles west of Caermarthen, "the Blue Boar," where the traveller may procure a change of carriage horses, and chaise, if desirable, an accommodation

modation rarely to be obtained after entering Pembrokeshire.

The first time we arrived in this place, the day was so far spent that I had only leisure to explore the banks of the Corran, for the space of a mile or two, before the close of evening.—But short as this ramble was, it proved delightful.—By sun-set I wandered to an open part of the river, where a number of the poor inhabitants of the neighbouring cottages, were eagerly pursuing their customary occupations in the coracle fishery; a shoal of that delicious fish, the Sewen, having been, only a few minutes before my arrival at the spot, detected in their migration from the sea, from whence they were driving up with the flood of tide. This was an interesting circumstance, the coracle fishery being a spectacle with which I had not been previously entertained in the course of our excursions through the Principality. To the coracle itself we were not strangers. This singular kind of navigable bark occurs so frequently

on the banks of the Towey, and other rivers, that they cannot easily escape the observation of the tourist, but it was on the Corran that I saw, for the first time, those feats of dexterity which are required in the management of such a capricious vessel.

The coracle, or *Corwc* of the Southwallian peasantry, deserves more explicit mention.—This machine consists of a light, but tough, or strong, and well connected frame of wood, or rather basket work, the figure of which is not inaptly compared to the section of a wall-nut shell. Externally the concave surface is covered with a sort of blanketing *, or sometimes with only canvass, well prepared with pitch and tar on the outside, to prevent the

* In ancient times the coracle was covered with the skins, or hides of animals, as the etymology implies. By chance a coracle may be still covered with leather, but this happens seldom. A kind of coarse Welsh flannel, prepared as above-mentioned, is generally made use of. The particular sort of flannel proper for the purpose, could be purchased a few years past at a low price, but it is at present worth two shillings a yard upon the spot where manufactured, and hence, through motives of oeconomy, canvass prepared in the same manner is becoming rather more universal than before. Flannel, though dear, is

water from penetrating through the interstices, and sinking it. The whole length of this

is preferable, because it is of a more durable substance, may be easier repaired, and keeps out the water much longer than the canvass.

The simplicity of this machine is apparent. In the coracle the reflecting mind contemplates an invention of a very early period; the effort of a time beyond the reach of authentic history. Possibly, indeed, we may with propriety admit it to be of celtic origin; a contrivance originating with the first necessities of human society emerging above a state of barbarism. Among our hardy ancestors, the coracle was the only kind of navigable bark in common use, the *vitilia navigia* of the Britons, as the Romans termed them. In a vessel of such an ungovernable structure, without helm or rudder, though possibly of a larger size, the Briton was accustomed to pass from one coast to another: to visit islands close to the shore: and at last, under the daring impulse of ability, to venture upon a perilous voyage across the channel;—an earnest this, of his future glory: of his aspiring pretensions to the boundless sovereignty of the seas!

What, if in the coracle we see the humble origin of the British navy?—Surprising thought! The mind awakens, the imagination rises, glows with emotions of sublime reflection, while we thus contemplate the great and glorious enterprise, the genius, the perseverance, and intrepedity of our ancestors.—From the flimsy bark, unable to resist the shock of the element on which it floated, and which an angry wave would annihilate, a superstructure has arisen to strike the world with awe!—What a source of conscious dignity does this afford? Here we trace the bark in its infancy, from the time in which the unassuming Briton bore the reproach of polished nations for the barbarous rudeness of such contrivances, till we behold them the pride, the glory of the British name, the support of our unbounded commerce in the remotest regions of the earth, the bulwarks of our naval independance:—ships that proudly lift their indignant heads in triumph to the storm of battle; that mock the rage of tempests!

this contrivance is about four feet and a half, or five feet at the most, and the breadth a

We are to suppose that the ancient Britons had more than one kind of vessel built on this plain construction. Beside the *Corwc*, or Coracle, they had the Keubal, the latter of which appears to have been the largest and strongest. Both of these are mentioned in the old Welsh laws, reorganised by Howel Dda, in 940, wherein the comparative value of each is stated, that of the Keubal is estimated at 16d, and the Coracle at only half that sum.

The natives of Northern Britain, in very early times, appear to have adopted vessels equally simple in contrivance, although of a nature somewhat different to the coracle. Ossian, in language beautifully descriptive, confirms the truth of this conjecture:—

"Larthon, the first of Bolga's race who travelled on the winds. White-bosomed, *spread* the *sails* of the king towards streamy Inis-fail; dun night was rolled before him, with its skirts of mist."

Again, the poet alludes more pointedly to the structure of the vessel, and to the first essay in the infant art of navigation:—

"Not there is the stride of Larthon, chief of Inis-huna. He mounts the wave on his own dark oak in Cuba's ridgy bay. *That oak which he cut from Lumon to bound along the sea.* The maids turn their eyes away lest the king should be lowly laid, *for never had they seen a ship*, dark rider of the wave!"

The coracle, in the form it now bears, might have been, in a certain measure, confined to the inhabitants of the southern parts of the island. Classic writers describe this vessel with so much accuracy, that we cannot well be mistaken. They speak of it as a sort of basket work, covered with hides; and further, the name of coracle is itself derived from *Coria*, in allusion to the latter circumstance. Besides those which were only capable of containing a single person, the Britons had coracles of a large size for transporting several persons together, and it was in such as these, according to Lucan, and others, that the Britons ventured to make their little voyages out to sea.

Such,

foot less than the length. Across the middle is a board, upon which the fisherman seats

Such, we are told, were the vessels in common use in southern Britain when Julius Cæsar invaded this country. Previous to that period, the Britons had rendered succours to the Gauls against their enemies the Romans, from whence it has been inferred their marine was of the same description as that of the Gauls, whose ships, according to Cæsar, were built of oak, so strong that the iron prows of those he had to oppose to them made no impression on them, and so lofty as not to be assailed in the ordinary mode of fighting, but under great disadvantage. This must, however, rest upon conjecture, for it does not absolutely appear that the Britons were possessed of shipping of such a warlike character, at the time adverted to. Neither is it any proof, admitting that the southern part of Britain received its first inhabitants from Gaul (Armorica) as some historians affirm, that the condition of the marine in both countries should be in an equal state of improvement so many ages after their settlement as a colony in this kingdom.

Under the controul of the Romans, which continued from the first to the fifth century, the British navy could scarcely deserve a name; it was strictly Roman; but it is probable the Britons improved their ideas of naval architecture upon the Roman model. After their departure we hear of fleets, vessels fitted out for commerce, and others for the design of war. This æra is beyond the reach of regular history, but the remembrance of them is preserved in the fugitive remains of those old Welsh writings, the *Memorial Triades* †. The poems of the bards of Cambria, in after times afford many allusions to the naval concerns of the Welsh Principality.

† "The three roving fleets of the isle of Britain: the fleet of Lawr, son of Eiriv; the fleet of Divug, son of Alban; and the fleet of Dolor, son of Murcharth."—"The three princes possessed of fleets of the isle of Britain: Geraint, son of Erbin; Gwenwynwyn, son of Nâv; and March, son of Meirchion."—The person who is styled Geraint, in this triad, was a prince of Devon in the early part of the sixth century. *Camb. Reg.* &c.

himself with caution, and then launches boldly into the flood.

There are commonly two fishermen employed in the same concern, for the mutual convenience of drawing the net along the river, each of whom has a coracle to himself, and both, as nearly as possible, start from the shore together. This is the critical moment in which both of them are to display their utmost address, to preserve their balance, and perform all the evolutions requisite; with one hand each of them must trawl an end of the net, and with the paddle in the other, direct his way to various parts of the river, as he observes the fish dart in the water, without entangling the net, or coracle, with those of the other fishermen employed at the same instant of time close to him. The breast, or broadest end of the vessel, constantly goes foremost; as they draw up the net the coracles approach close to each other, when one of the fishermen takes charge of the fish they have

have captured in his coracle, and having emptied the net, they again separate, and trawl as before. By this means they take the sewen in plenty, besides salmon, and sometimes trout.

" The green bridge of Wales," one of the reputed wonders of the Principality, was the object of a solitary excursion of five miles, or more, through the woods, to the south west of St. Clear's, on the morning following. Fame speaks highly of this spot, but as in many other instances with very little reason. The only circumstance for which it is at all remarkable, arises from this simple circumstance, the waters of a small stream, which takes its rise, as nearly as we could guess, to the northward, quits its course above ground, at this place, and, shrinking from the light of day, forces a troublous passage through a subterraneous rocky avenue, from whence it never again emerges to view, till its waters rush in one collected stream from the rocks, upon the

the sea coast below the village of Pendine. This accidental peculiarity the country people persist to consider as a very extraordinary phœnomenon, and relate many strange and credulous tales of adventurers, who at different times have ventured to explore the secret passage of the stream.

This "wonder" did not long detain us. We left it with an intention of proceeding to new inn, upon the boundary between the two counties of Caermarthen and Pembroke. But as it happened, rather fortunately, to prevent disappointment, we had not directed our course far beyond Marras before we obtained such a description of new inn, the place to which we were hastening, as induced us to retrace our journey. A countryman we overtook on his way thither, with his lime cart, informed us, we should find it only a miserable village, destitute of any house of public accommodation, as might be rationally expected from the name imposed on it.—Returning through Pendine, we struck down towards

towards the sea coast, and after a time descended into a frightful sandy desert, the arid boundary of that part of the great bay of Caermarthen, which extends from the rocky shore of Tenby, with little interruption, to the point of Laugharn.

The ebbing waters of the bay had left the beach uncovered to a boundless extent. We traversed its sands under the reverberating heat of a fervid mid-day sun, without the possibility of obtaining the least refreshment, not even of water, to allay our excessive thirst. This was indeed a day of toil, though with the naturalist I may be disposed to think it well rewarded by the acquisitions our walk enriched us with.

The sands were bestrewed with a greater variety of uncommon shells than I ever remember to have seen at any one time upon our most productive shores. There were several distinct parallel ridges of shells, that extended

extended for miles along the beach, all of which had been apparently washed out of their native beds in the sands by the preceding tide. Shells of the solen genus were the most abundant. Of these the species *Siliqua* were numerous, and of an uncommon size. *Vagina*, another of the larger kinds, were scattered among the rest, and likewise *ensis:* that rare species, *legumen*, were plentiful here, beyond conception; and *pellucidus*, was sparingly sprinkled with the others. Many curious shells of the Tellina, and other genera, were also lying about the shore.

Our track in search of these laid the whole way at nearly a mile to the southward of every trace of cultivation, or society. Midway between us and the land, the drifted sands were thrown into the form of a dreary range of hills, that formed a natural barrier to the further encroachments of the sea, and such as we found every where impassable till we approached the point of Laugharn.

Fatigued

Fatigued as we were, the sight of a drove of cattle bathing in the sea, began at last to inspire a hope that we could not be far distant from some village, and which we accordingly observed soon afterwards: a cluster of cottages rising upon a small patch of land in the midst of an arid solitude. These were the habitations of fishermen. Further on we reached a farm house, at which we were regaled with a bowl of milk, and oaten cake, just warm from the griddle; a breakfast, at three in the afternoon, not of the most sumptuous nature truly, but of which we had no reason to complain, because it was the best the house could afford. Cheese and butter, with barley bread, potatoes, and buttermilk, comprising the usual routine of the family provisions, even in this respectable establishment.

Taking leave of our hospitable new acquaintances with a suitable acknowledgement, that the intrusive visit of future strangers might not be disapproved, we once more

more committed ourselves to the wide waste of sands in search of marine productions.

To all our enquiries concerning the fisheries of the place, we could gather only, that turbot, soles, and other flat fish, are plentiful upon this coast. The head of the sword-fish, *Xiphias Gladius*, has been thrown upon the coast of Laugharn, which seems to be the only authority with ichthyologists for recording that species as a native of the British seas.

The fishermen of those parts entertain a whimsical notion of the *Medusæ**, a tribe of Vermes, that are frequently cast upon those sands in great numbers, and of an enormous size. These, they call sea jellies, water boils, or water troubles, believing them to be only the froth of the sea coagulated into this globose, misshapen form, by the violent mo-

* Better known by the name of the Medusa's head, a title under which all the species are confounded; or that of Sea nettle, from the tingling sensation with which they affect the hand on touching them.

tion

tion of the sea in stormy weather.—A multitude of insects, chiefly those of the coleopterous kind, haunt this sandy region; the most remarkable of those we noticed, was *Scarabæus Agricola*, a species unknown before as an inhabitant of Britain.

About the loose sands that lie between the cluster of cottages above-mentioned, and the point of Laugharn, the shells of *mactra lutraria* occur in the greatest profusion; a proof the most convincing that this curious species, which the English conchologist has hitherto esteemed so greatly for its rarity, is one of the most abundant shells upon this coast. The children amuse themselves in gathering the valves of this shell in heaps, and strewing them along the foot tracks leading to the town: an amusement not devoid of some utility, since the sands are so light and dry in this part as to afford at best but very tedious walking without them.

The foot tracks across the sands conducted

us to a swampy ground, intersected with ditches, and from thence to the foot of an abrupt eminence, the lofty side of which is to be ascended by means of a steep path way, worn by use into the face of the solid rock.—Upon this eminence, which appears but thinly covered with soil, the thrifty inhabitants contrive to raise some patches of grain, such as oats, rye, and barley, and to feed a few cattle. The stranger unaccustomed to such places, is astonished at the hazardous situation of the cottages stuck upon this rock, which at every gust of wind one should conceive to be threatened with destruction. We could not, indeed, but look, and tremble, for some heedless little urchins, the children of those cottagers, who were playing upon the verge of the steepest precipice, at the momentary risk of falling, and being dashed to atoms.

Gaining the summit of this hill, a grand display of scenic beauty is unfolded; the Bristol channel, and the adjacent country, appears

appears widely stretched to observation, with the town of Laugharn below, at the foot of the declivity.

Laugharn is a neat, compact, seaport town, of small importance: in a situation the most retired imaginable, and is therefore seldom visited by strangers. It lies in no direct road to any place of consequence, neither are the accommodations, I have reason to suspect, inviting. To prevent that disappointment in others, we ourselves experienced, it should be stated, that although the place is literally crowded with petty alehouses, not one of several at which we enquired, could furnish even a mug of ale, with the exception of one rather better than the rest, to which we were at last directed under the dignified appellation of "the tavern." When malt is dear they abstain from brewing in this place.

In the ancient division of the country, Laugharn was comprised within the cantref

of Narberth, so that we are to consider it as an appendage to Rhos, the territory granted by Henry the first to the colony of Flemings, established during the reign of that king, in Pembrokeshire. At this time it is included in the county of Caermarthenshire.

The town still boasts the venerable ruins of its ancient castle, stationed at the entrance of the Corran river, from whence, according to the old Welsh writers, it derives the name of Abercorran.—The name of Laugharn, or Talacharne, which it bears at present, is of much more recent date.

This hostile edifice is built on a low, rocky projection, close to which the sea flows at high water. The external aspect is more august than might be expected, when we consider the injury it must have endured in the wars of the Cambrian princes. All the walls were strengthened with lofty, round, embattled towers, of which the shell remains: part of the

the walls are finely overhung with ivy, and the area within the castle is converted into a garden.

We are in the dark concerning the founder of this castle. It makes a figure in the reign of Henry the second, and was most assuredly built before the death of his predecessor. We have not forgotten that the castle of Abercorran, with those of St. Clear's, and Llanstephan, were the three castles seized upon by Rhys, prince of South Wales, in the year 1189, before he began the building of his castle of Kidwelly.—During the reign of king John, Abercorran castle was again reduced, with its former companions, in the vicissitudes of war, St Clear's, and Lanstephan, by Llewelyn, prince of North Wales, after his successful attack upon Caermarthen castle in 1215. Once again, namely, in 1257, this castle was in the possession of the English, or of their Welsh ally, Rhys Vychan, since Llewelyn, then the reigning prince of North

Wales, after defeating the English at Dinevawr, and Caermarthen, directed his arms against this castle, and also those of Lanstephan, Maenchochoe, and Arberth, all which, with their respective towns, he destroyed at that time, or did them material injury.—Lelande speaks of this edifice in the following terms: "Lacharne in Hostia *Tavæ* flu. *Tava* a little lower goith into Tewe. It longid sumtime to the Erle of Northumberland." *Itin. f. 22. V. 5.*

A short additional walk of three miles upon the direct road from Laugharn, brought us back to the inn at St. Clear's, where we arrived rather weary with our day's excursion, about dusk, after performing a circuit, altogether, of about twenty miles.

St. Clear's is connected, on the eastward, by a small bridge, to the village of Lanvihangel. The scite of the ancient castle of St. Clear's, a military erection often mentioned in

in the annals of Cambrian history, alone deserves the attention of the tourist in passing through this place. It was not till after taking some pains, that I could detect the spot; the castle, which was in ruins in Leland's time, being utterly demolished since his days. This writer may assist us in defining the exact position formerly occupied by this edifice: "Clare castel ruines," he observes, "are hard by St. Clear's Chirch."—Near this religious structure I sought for them, but could only discover the trace of an old wall, with some other detached vestiges of masonry, which, though they might possibly mark the ancient limits of that building, are too imperfect to authorise any positive assertion. Higher up, upon a rising ground in an enclosed piece of grass land, close beside the town, is a small artificial mount, called the castle tump, the scite, as I conjecture, of the citadel.

There is nothing to repay the trouble of a

visit to the interior of St. Clear's church. The sepulchral memorials are few, and of those only one is in any respect remarkable. This is of the mural kind, with the emblematic symbol of a happy immortality, Hope, reclining on an urn; and which was erected in the year 1785, to the memory of Thomas Howel Rees, Esq. of Llwynypiod, in this parish, by his widow, Mrs. Bridget Rees, in token of her affection for an amiable husband.

Coins, and other such remains of the Roman age, if we are informed correctly, are not unfrequently discovered in ploughing the land in the neighbourhood of this town. I was shewn a coin of Carausius, in middle brass: and a smaller of the same, by an inhabitant in this place, that were found hard by, and which the owner deemed a treasure, erroneously considering it as one of the British king, *Caractacus*; a mistake very commonly made by the people in this country.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Tavernspite.—Stretch of lowland scenery.—Environs, and distant view of Narberth.—Ride on the upper road from St. Clear's:—Visit to the remains of Whitland abbey.—Ty Gwyn ar Taf, or the white house on the Tave, the palace of Howel Dda:—Code of ancient laws of the Cymry, instituted by Dyvnwall Moelmud, reorganized by that sovereign.—Curious extracts relative to the affairs of the royal household:—Commutation fines:—Penal offences, &c.—Meineu Gwyr, a druidical antiquity.—Narberth.

TILL we arrive on the declivity of a bold, swelling hill, near Tavernspite, several miles to the westward of St. Clear's, on the Narberth route, the character of the country partakes of little variety; it is tame and dull, and besides this, the traveller in wet weather has

the mortification to find himself, in this part of his excursion, upon one of the worst roads in the Principality. An idea of this may be better conceived from the tedious progress of the Milford mail, which in performing its diurnal routine upon this road at such unfavourable times, can scarcely proceed at above the rate of three, or at most four miles an hour.—There is a radical defect to which this is attributable, that cannot easily be overcome: the land itself is unsound at bottom, and the roads, in consequence, incapable of that liberal repair which might otherwise be bestowed on them. We observed that much of the soil, both here and on the eastern confines of Pembroke county, and in the vicinity of Narberth especially, is of a soft, argillaceous nature, which readily imbibing the moisture to a great depth, a few days of heavy rain must inevitably reduce to a miserable condition for travelling. Even in dry weather these roads are very indifferent.

Ascend

Ascending the hilly ridge of land towards Tavernspite, across which the road continues, the eye glances over a low, protracted prospect of rural beauty, richly varied, and harmonious, the only point of landscape deserving praise in this journey, with the exception of the expansive scenery that rises to the view as we approach within sight of Narberth.

There is still another turnpike road from St. Clear's to the westward, which passes Whitland in a course nearly collateral with that before described, and which enters Narberth at the close of about a nine miles stage, as well as the former.—This we determined to pursue in an excursion towards Carew last summer. Some memorials of antiquity, connected in an eminent manner with the records of Cambrian history, were to engage our minds at this time, as we proposed to deviate from the direct road in search of *Ty Gwyn*, and the remains of the celebrated abbey of Whitland, a deviation in which we promised ourselves much real gratification, from a recollection

lection of the importance of the latter structure in "the days of other times."

Whitland, or as others name it, Whiteland abbey, was originally stationed in a bottom, near a branch of the river Taf, amidst the wilds of Cardyth, and Coidrath forest, which together embraced its environs for miles. Thus immured within the bosom of dismal woods, which perfectly secluded it from the intrusion of society, no situation could be better suited for the retirement of the gloomy enthusiasts of monkish superstition than that of Whitland. The institution flourished till the dissolution sealed its fate, for being then divested of its revenues, which were considerable, it fell into a state of decay, from which it never afterwards recovered. So lately as the beginning of the seventeenth century, those stupendous woods remained *.

"* But bytwixt *Cairmardin*, and *Whitland* is in no place such plenti of wood as in *Whitland* self standing in a vast wood as in a wilderness." *Leland*.

In 1662, the two forests of Cardyth and Coidrath, one first in Caermarthenshire, and the other in that of Pembroke, are pointed out in Speed's folio map of those counties. These noble woods are since destroyed.

Speed

Speed is persuaded that this abbey of Whiteland rose, through the pious attention of Rhys Tudor, prince of South Wales, to the holy catholic religion, in the year 1086; but should this opinion be founded upon authentic evidence, we are surprised the monk of Lhancarvon, *Caradoc*, who enters minutely into the eventful history of Rhys in that year, should have passed over a circumstance of so much consequence in those times, as the foundation of an abbey, in perfect silence. We shall not dispute the veracity of Speed, although we must distrust it. In that year, as Caradoc affirms, Rhys was compelled to desert his territories, to escape the vengeance of Madawc, Cadwgan, and Riryd, the sons of Blethyn ap Confyn, who were in open rebellion against him, with a host of their adherents; and it was not till after his return to South Wales with a powerful body of Irish, and Scots forces, that he could reduce them to due obedience. Events of this consequence to his personal security; nay, even to the welfare

welfare of the state, we may imagine, would have so far engrossed the attention of that prince, as to leave him at no leisure to establish such a noble building; or even granting that it was undertaken when the turbulence was suppressed, we are to believe that Caradoc would have mentioned it. This writer speaks of the place in the year 1186, under the name of Ty Gwyn, as being the burial spot of Cadwalader, the son of prince Rhys, who was privately murdered just at that time in West Wales. But this does not appear to have been the usual burial place of the south wallian princes, like the abbey of Stratflur, in Cardiganshire. Leland calls it, after the Welsh etymology, Teguin, ar Tave*, but in another passage he speaks of the "Abbot of Whiteland†." At the dissolution it was valued at 135l. 3s. 6d. according to Dugdale.

* Lel. Itin. vol. 5. fol. 12—23.

† "The abbot of Whiteland told me a meri tale of one that purchased a licens by a colour of ii Rivers about *Powysland*, of the which (as I remember) sounded that in Walsh, that is in English a Hogge of ii yeres, and the other a Hogge of three yeres." *Lel. Itin. 5. fol. 79.*

Obeying

Obeying the instructions received at St. Clear's, after pursuing the upper road for some time, we directed our course down a narrow carriage way, that diverges to the right, till we reached the " forge," an old established iron work, at the distance of half a mile from the road. This work stands close to the scite of the old abbey.

For the scattered, unmeaning remnants of this ecclesiastic pile, we sought with small success upon our arrival, till one of the cottagers, followed by a troop of his companions, being apprised of the intention of our visit to this lonely quarter, after expressing much surprise at our curiosity, took the pains to escort us through his neighbour's gardens, within the compass of which the greater portion of the mouldering relics of its walls are to be observed. Unfortunately, the free-stone of which the ruin consisted, becoming a tempting object of peculation with the inhabitants of this spot for years past, the remains at this time

are

are trifling indeed. Our guide endeavoured to demonstrate the form and dimensions of various parts of the building, the nave, the chapter-house, and cloisters; but all the knowledge we could gather from the aspect of the ruins, amounted only to the certainty, that the abbey once extended over a wide space of ground. In the village is preserved a piece of sculpture, discovered among the ruins, a flat stone, charged with armorial bearings, perhaps the vestige of some old monument belonging to the abbey: the arms appear to be that of an earl of Pembroke, of the house of Tudor.

We were desired to notice a rising eminence directly opposite, on which the people pretend to say, foundations of good substantial masonry have been detected upon turning up the land, at no very distant period. They also mention the fragments of leaden pipes, which they suppose to have been continued the whole way from the summit, along the slope

slope of the hill, down to the level bottom, in which the fragments of the ancient abbey are bestrewed. I was anxious to avail myself of the opinion entertained by those people concerning the stone-work observed in this elevated spot, in reply to which they endeavoured to persuade us, those foundations were most likely the vestiges of the palace of some one of the sovereign princes of South Wales, perhaps that of Howel the good.

In the wide research for historic data, the liberal mind will not disdain the humblest evidence, even that of the cottage record. To reject such testimony would be oftentimes presumptuous, and above all others, in such a country as Wales, where the best authorities are in the hands of private individuals. Truth, we are aware, assumes the plainest garb, and never shines with greater splendour than when thus attired. But here opinions are divided. We are directed by tradition to seek for *Ty Gwyn*, the situation of Howel's palace in another

another place:—namely, in a spot which still retains that name on the other side of the Narberth road from the station of the ancient abbey of Whitland. At the place alluded to is a house called Ty Gwyn, or Whitland, to this time, a building in itself of no consequence, unless it derive that epithet from its situation on the scite of Howel's palace, as the report prevails. The house is now in a ruinous state, and scarcely habitable. About fifty years ago it was the mansion of John Adams, Esq.—This we visited after returning from Whitland abbey.

We look upon the latter spot with diminished interest, in proportion as we feel inclined to distrust the accuracy of the tradition connected with it. Whether it be in reality the scite of the royal residence of Howel, or not, is altogether uncertain.—It may be so: or, on the contrary, we should esteem it equally probable, that the palace of that great legislator occupied the rising ground above Whitland

Whitland abbey, presuming, as we may, at the same time, that the buildings at Ty Gwyn was only of a temporary nature; one erected solely on the spur of the moment, for the accommodation of the elders assembled by the command of Howel, in the tenth century, for the purpose of revising the laws of Wales; and whom it would have been unprincely to entertain within the precincts of the royal mansion. This conjecture has at least the countenance of one, or more of the Welsh manuscripts extant, which mention Ty Gwyn as a slight building; a sort of hunting place *, built with white rods, and thence called by that name, which literally signifies the *white house*, in the language of the country.

* I am not by any means satisfied that the hunting seat of Ty Gwyn ar Taf, did belong to Howel Dda, previous to the time in which this assembly was convened. If we are to credit the assertions of John Lewis, Esq. of Manarnawan, in his MSS. notes on Owen's Hist. of Pembrokeshire, within which county it was included in Howel's time, the hunting seat alluded to, belonged to Gwynfa. dd, prince of Dyfed, one of Howel Dda's assistants in compiling the laws, and was only lent to that sovereign for the purpose by Gwynfardd. This prince was the son of Pwyll Pendevig Dyved, and grandson of Meirig king of Dyved, who lived in the beginning of the eighth century.

The occasion upon which this assembly was convened at the palace of Ty Gwyn, by the command of Howel, was of the utmost political importance. They were called upon to assist in the arduous task of revising the laws of Wales as they existed at that crisis. Those laws, the institutes of many preceding ages, had fallen, in the course of time, into great abuse. Many of the regulations were obsolete; errors prevailed in others, which the ablest administrators of public justice were incapable of expounding, and these being left to the blind disposal of the ignorant, and the corrupt, instead of answering the primary object of their institution, had degenerated at last into a source of intolerable vexation. But besides this, there were other views to be considered. The progressive advancement of civilization, the improvements of manners, and useful arts, and the more general distribution of property among the middle classes of society, demanded a further extension of those laws, by the force of which

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the private rights of individuals were to be protected from molestation.

Howel perceived the expediency of reforming those laws which were the object of complaint among his subjects, but no legal power was invested within himself for such an undertaking. The sovereign of the Cambrian Britons, from times immemorial, was but the organ of the people; he was simply recognised as such, and though the monarchy was in a manner hereditary, it oftener proved elective; or fluctuated with the will of the people. The Britons, from the remotest time in which their laws were framed, had held it as an invariable maxim, never to entrust inordinate power in the hands of their sovereign: they preferred to endure all the evils, and the inconveniencies arising from the imperfections of their laws, rather than submit to transfer their independance in this point, to the will of the supreme authority. The means within his power for the redress of

such a grievance, were therefore distinctly pointed out. In conformity with these, he called a meeting of the elders of the people, that they, in their enlightened wisdom, might devise the most salutary measures for amending those laws; that they might explain, in the best manner possible, such passages as were ambiguous; expunge those which were inexplicable, or obsolete; add others that might be thought necessary for the better maintenance of the public safety; and finally, produce, by constitutional means, such a code of laws as were congenial with the established customs of the people, incorporated with such improvements as the policy of society at that time demanded. This accomplished, it only remained with Howel to affix his sanction to the fiat of their procedure, in order to establish, upon a basis of immutability, the due administration of the laws thus produced: the result of the wisest counsels his Principality could furnish.

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Preparatory to this solemn convocation, he sent for the archbishop of Menevia (St. David's), the rest of the bishops, and the principal of the clergy, amounting altogether to "seven score croziers, including bishops, archbishops, abbots, and good instructors." He likewise summoned all the barons, and other persons of distinction, with six men out of every *comot* in Wales, from which twelve of the most sagacious laymen, persons of probity and great experience, were selected to amend the laws*. To these the prince added Blegwryd, the son of Owain, chancellor of Landaff, a man of profound learning, and one perfectly well skilled in the ancient laws to assist in their revisal.—Howel himself repaired to Ty Gwyn, and remained with his senators all Lent, which time was devoted to fasting, and prayers, and in imploring the divine aid to enable them to perform the momentous task they had undertaken, with

* The number of persons appointed with this view, are stated variously in different authorities.

ability. The principal of those laws were divided into three sections; those which concerned order and regulations of the royal household, and the court:—the affairs of the country:—and the customs belonging to particular persons, and privileges of individual right.

When the code was settled, and fairly drawn up by Morgeneu, and Cyvnerth his son, Howel sealed it with his royal approbation, and commanded that the laws contained therein should be strictly obeyed throughout his territories. The assembly then invoked divine vengeance, and the malediction of the king, of themselves, and of all Wales, upon whomsoever should transgress the institutes thus ordained: upon the judge who should accept a bribe to bias his decision, and upon the lord that should present it. In order further to impress the neighbouring states with due respect for this renovated constitution, Howel repaired to Rome, in person with Martin, the archbishop of Menevia,

Morved,

Morved, the bishop of Bangor, Marchlwys, bishop of Landaff, and the before-mentioned eminent Blegwryd, the chancellor, the deputation appointed by the assembly to attend upon the pope with the laws. These were all recited before his Holiness, and being then duly ratified with his assent, and spiritual authority, were admitted, as by one consent of all other nations, to be the established constitution of the Welsh.

Three copies of the laws were ordered to be transcribed as records, one of which was deposited in the archives of the palace of Aberfraw, the seat of government appertaining to the princes of North Wales; another for that of South Wales; and the third for the use of the court of Howel at Ty Gwyn. To either of these places, the people interested were at liberty to resort, in order to peruse them, and as it further appears, to take such transcripts for their own use, as they thought proper.

Howel succeeded to the Principality of South Wales in 907, and in 940 he became sovereign of all Wales, the sceptre of which he swayed till the time of his death, which happened in the year 948. Those laws were in force from his time till the conquest of Wales, when they were superseded by the imperious mandates of the English monarch. A sort of government, combining, in a discordant manner, the civil with the military laws of England, was then imposed upon that hapless country. This system, requisite most likely, at such a time, to secure the dominion of the ambitious Edward, was odious in the extreme to the fiery, independant spirit of the haughty Cambrian, who unable to throw off the yoke, was ever prone to evince his insubordination in tumult and bloodshed, when the slightest opportunity was afforded. But another age succeeded, to witness the diffusion of milder laws, to observe their influence: to appreciate that sum of real happiness which peace and order can bestow.

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A politician, even slightly versed in the finesse of modern governments, would smile at the ostentatious parade of wisdom; at so much learning, ingenuity, discussion, and consummate gravity, expended in the construction of such a system of judicial precepts, as this assemblage of distinguished men produced. But the laws of Howel bear no analogy to the state of modern refinement. We are not to consider this code as a stupendous effort of human intellect. We do not receive it as the great and boasted project of an enlightened people: as the production of a polished age: as the fancied semblance of perfection in the art of government. It professes no false, seductive, principles of individual liberty: no wider extent of the executive power; no dazzling privilege, or higher glory either for the prince, or people, but it inculcates that which every social institution should endeavour to establish, reciprocal security, by pointing out the duties incumbent upon all. It states correctly, in what consists the power

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of the royal prerogative, the utmost stretch to which ambition, in the breast of a Cambrian monarch, dared aspire, and to the people guarantees those privileges, which the cherished laws of their early ancestors laid down as necessary to constitute their native independance.

The laws of Howel were not the bold projection of an imagination distempered by the fervour of exalted ambition. He aimed at no vast power beyond that which his predecessors had enjoyed, and the people had admitted. They were not the produce of the tenth century. Dispassionately considered, they were scarcely more than the ancient laws amended, which the Cambrian Britons had acknowledged a thousand years before. They were the laws of Dyvnwal Voel, assigned to them four hundred years before the Christian æra. —And more, the laws of Dyvnwal, unless we are to discredit that indisputed source of authority in British history, the *triads*, were only

only the institutes of Prydain, who flourished ages before Dyvnwal, harmonised, and suited to the rising condition of the Britons, as a people just emerging above the lowest state of barbarism.—The laws of Prydain were improved upon by Dyvnwal, and reorganised by Howel, with only such additions as the nature of existing circumstances in his time required. Thus the laws of Howel come strongly recommended to our hands by the concurrence of former ages, and have a powerful claim to our reflection. Abstractedly viewed, they might, or they might not shrink from a comparison with any other code of laws in force in other civilized nations so late as the tenth century. Let us, however, trace them through the dreary retrospect of the barbarous ages from whence they were transmitted, and we must confess they are more benign than might be anticipated. They recognize the principles of individual rights to an extent beyond conception, considering the untutored state of society in Britain at the period to which they refer.

refer. It was no herculean labour, as some have idly contested, for Howel to obtain the obedience of the Welsh to those laws which were in substance the very institutes of their forefathers. That people, ever tenacious of the established notions of their country, could not have been averse even to new laws founded on such a model. This fact is certain, they did obtain unqualified submission, and Howel received the reward of his paternal care: his memory lived, and ever will live, where it is beyond the violence of a monarch to impress it;—in the grateful remembrance of posterity *.

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* To those desirous of becoming acquainted with the ancient laws of Britain, the perusal of this code is likely to afford much useful information. They reflect considerable light upon the primitive customs of the Britons, at a period of time very far removed beyond the reach of any other source of historic testimony. We are to value them as documents of a very curious nature: as a series of regulations original in their conception in many points, as having risen with the first necessities of society. And, that they have been faithfully transmitted to us in their original purity of spirit, rests upon authority as little to be disputed as any other species of accredited history of former times whatever.—They were, in a word, as it has been properly observed in substance at least, the jurisprudence of the Britons from the earliest period; simple, and few in their origin; accumulating, and becoming more diffusive, according to the progressive state

Are we then to be astonished, however incoherent many of the instituted laws of Howel appear in the present day, that at the conquest the Welsh should be afflicted at the loss of them; when deprived of the administration of their own laws, what was granted in return?—A military yoke to suppress them: a system of coercion to prevent them from shaking

state of society for which they were formed. Several copies of those laws have survived to our time. These differ in certain slight particulars, such as the style, and manner of language, but in which the spirit of every individual institute is nearly, or generally speaking, strictly the same. The public became conversant with the laws of Howel Dda, through the literary labours of Dr. Wootton, who, assisted by the Rev. Moses Williams, in 1730, published a good edition of them from materials collected from several old copies, and methodically distributed into a more connected and compendious form.—There is a valuable manuscript in the cottonian library, preserved in the British museum, bearing the title of *Cyvreithian Hywell*, which the antiquary will consult with much satisfaction; this being the fairest copy of them perhaps in being at this time. We have reason for believing that this copy is a transcript from an ancient record taken about the reign of Richard the first. It is written in the Welsh language. The English reader has, however, the less reason to regret his inability to peruse the original, as a correct translation of the first part of it has lately made its appearance in the Cambrian Register †, and the editors promise it shall be continued in the future volumes.

† Vol. 1795—1796.

In

shaking off the shackles of usurpation. The policy of Edward would neither permit them to enjoy their own laws, or those of England. Perchance this policy was necessary to the very existence of his power, but that necessity does not prove it just. It was not till the house of Tudor assumed the throne, in the person of Henry the seventh, in which the line

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In an excursory survey of this judicial code, there are certain institutes of a cast so very peculiar, that we cannot refrain adverting to them. But we can only skim the surface lightly. Our remarks will nccessarily be constrained to narrow limits, as it is greatly apprehended the incurious reader will deem the digression much too long already.

Among other singular particulars comprised in the *Institutes of the Court*, the following are very remarkable.

The officers of the court, it appears, were entitled to have the woollen garments they stood in need of, from the king; and the linen garments from the queen, three times in the year, namely at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide.

A protection extended at certain times to all the officers of the king's household: for example, the judge was protected while pleading from the first cause to the last;—the domestic chaplain, between the palace and the nearest church:—the protection of the chandler lasted from the lighting of the first candle, until the last was extinguished;—and the page of the chamber, from the time of his going to gather rushes, until the spreading of the king's bed was finished; or from the time a person commissioned by his orders, went for a load of straw to put under the king,

line of native British princes was to a certain extent restored, that the Welsh were emancipated from the servile yoke that deprived them of their rights. A still more favourable epoch dawned upon them in the reign of his successor, when the legislature of the country thought fit to grant them all the rights and privileges of English subjects. Then a political

king, and whilst the bed was making, and the clothes spreading upon it, till he had taken them off in the morning. This institute affords us a striking trait of the simplicity of ancient manners, when even a potent sovereign was lodged in a style which the meanest rustic in the present day would scarcely envy: his bed was of rushes, or straw! that of the English monarch was no better in those times. Another regulation enacts, that the pillow whereon the king sat throughout the day, should be placed under his head at night; and that the bed of the page of the chamber, and also that of the chambermaid, should be kept in the king's apartment. The king in the day time had another attendant, called *Troedawc*, or the foot-holder, whose province it was to hold the king's feet in his lap or bosom, from the time he sat down at the banquet, till he went to sleep: he was also to *scratch* the king, and guard his person from every harm.

The presumptive heir to the throne had lodgings in the hall of the palace. It was the duty of him who provided firing, to kindle a fire, and shut the door close, when his highness was gone to sleep.

Privileges descended to the meanest person in the king's household. The washerwoman was entitled to her victuals from the palace, and also to her clothes, and on the day she washed for the queen, she was to receive a present from her. The protection of this female in her official capacity, extended as far as she could fling her washing beetle,

tical order was again established, the military power gave way to the civil, and the representation of the boroughs in that country was admitted by parliament. Wales, no longer pressed down by rigorous enactions, which marked its former servitude, again emerged to self-importance; and "from that moment, as by

beetle, that of the baker-woman, as far as she could throw her spattle: and the provider of fuel, as far as he could cast his hatchet. The porter's occupation was profitable for a strong man, but the emoluments of his office depended so much upon his strength, and feats of activity, that he must have been expert indeed at all times, to avail himself of those emoluments. Out of every present coming through the gate, even for the king himself, he was to have a handful. He was to have a billet of wood out of every load of fuel passing through the gate, which he could pull out without hindering the horse, while he held his other hand upon the gate. Four pence was his due from every prisoner upon whom the gate should be shut. Out of the booty of swine, taken at any time, and driven through the gate way, he was to have that sow which he could lift up by the bristles with one hand, so that the feet should be raised as high as his knees. Any animal without, or rather having lost its tail, belonged to him. He was also entitled to his errands in the palace, gratis, and to the remains of the cheese he toasted.—The chief huntsman enjoyed a protection beyond all the rest, for whoever would sue him, must take, or arrest him in his bed, on the morning of May day, before he put on his boots, as he was under no obligation to answer the complaint, unless he should be found at that time in the manner thus described.

The villains of the king were compelled by laws to build for him nine

by a charm," to employ the emphatic strain of a proficient statesman, "the tumults subsided; obedience was restored; peace, order, and civilization followed in the train of liberty—when the day-star of the English con-

nine buildings for his residence, namely, the hall, chamber, provision house, stable, dog kennel, barn, kiln, privy, and dormitory.

An insult to the king was punishable by fine. There were three ways (or persons) that give insult to the king; he that violates his protection, he that kills one of his men in his presence, and he that obstructs (seduces) his wife. For either of these insults, a hundred cows were to be paid on account of every cantref † of the kingdom. Besides these, he was to forfeit a silver rod, with three knobs at top, and three at bottom, that should reach from the ground to the king's face, when he sat in his chair, and be as thick as his ring finger; together with a golden bason, which should hold full as much as the king drank at once, of the thickness of a husbandman's nail, who should have followed husbandry for seven years, and a golden cover as broad as the king's face, and equally thick as the bason. Some copies state it to be a rod of gold as long as the king, and the thickness of his little finger, besides a gold tablet as broad as his face, and as thick as a husbandman's nail, under the same circumstances as the former. The queen might be insulted by three means, namely, by transgressing her protection, by striking her through hatred, or by violently wresting any thing out of her hand. The satisfaction fine for either of those insults, was estimated at one third of that allowed to the king, the gold and silver excepted.

The lord of Dinevawr, who was in power a king, and whose country of Dinevawr was called a kingdom, held a privilege not less singular;

† If this be literally understood, the amount was enormous, South Wales alone containing sixty four cantreves.

constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within, and without"—

" *Simul alba nautis*
Stella refulsit,
Defluit saxis agitatus humor:
Concidunt venti, fugiuntque nubes:
Et minax (quòd sic voluere) ponto
Unda recumbit."

Meinen

he might be insulted by three means, the compensation for each of which was specified to be as many white cows as would reach completely, one at the tail of the other, with a bull between every score, from Argoel to the palace of Dinevawr, Caermarthenshire.

The *penal code* was far less severe than the barbarous disposition of those times would lead us to conceive. There was no crime whatever, however heinous, even to the murder of the king himself, from the corporal punishment of which the culprit might not escape, if he could raise the fine established by law for his particular offence.—Should any one murder the king, the commutation fine was three times as much as was appointed to be paid for an insult to him. The murder of a mayor, or chancellor, was nine score kine, with advancement. For the chief of a family, thrice nine and thrice nine kine, with three advancements. For a baron, not holding an office, six, and six score kine, with three advancements. A free native gentleman, that is, one not debased by low blood, three and three score kine, with three advancements. A king's villain, the same as the free native gentleman. The life of a slave, if completely bodied, was valued at one pound and a half; or, if maimed, too old, or too young, or if he came from beyond the sea, a pound was to be the sum forfeited for taking his life; because, it is observed, "he debased his right by going into bondage, or being a hireling." One third of all the fines belonged to the king, the rest of the satisfaction money was distributed among the relations of the deceased, according to their degrees of consanguinity,

Meineu Gwyr, a relic of the ancient British, or Druidical antiquity, consisting of a large circle of rude, mis-shapen stones, placed upon the summit of a hill in this neighbourhood, is no doubt an interesting object, but which did not fall within the scope of our own

guinity, from the first to the sixth degree. If a man killed a bishop, or an abbot, upon the king's land, the fine went to the king.

To prove an alibi according to those laws, was scarcely possible: this demanded the oath of fifty men, without a slave, or an exile, and of three witnesses at least, who were under a vow of abstaining from riding on horseback, from linen, and from women.—Nine persons were distinguished, whose word was separately deemed sufficient in lieu of the above on this particular occasion, or as witnesses on others, among whom were a lord between his two men, an abbot between his two monks at the door of his choir, a maid respecting her virginity, and a thief without hope as to his fellow thief, when brought to the gallows, for then his word was allowed to be true.

If a man struck a slave, he forfeited twelve pence, six pence for three cubits of cloth to make him a coat, three pence for breeches, one penny for buskins and gloves, one penny for a bill or hatchet, if a woodman, and one penny for a rope twelve cubits in length. But should the slave, on the contrary, strike a freeman, it was held just to cut off his right hand for the offence, unless the lord or owner of the slave paid an insult fine to the person aggrieved, according to his rank and condition in life.

The old Welsh laws paid a great regard to the preservation of cats. Any one destroying a cat, was sentenced to pay a fine of four pence, a large sum truly, at a time when seven day's work at ploughing the

own observation, as we found it was impossible to learn exactly the spot in which it is to be seen, before we left Whitland. Llwyd tells us this is situated near Kilmaen, in Caermarthenshire.

An anonymous design, taken two centuries ago, or more, lies now before me, in which

land was valued at only half that amount. Her qualifications were clearly stated to be, that she must have perfect ears, eyes, nails, and tail; that she be unmarked by fire, or by killing mice, and did not devour her kittens. The cat that guarded the house and barn of the king, was further protected, should any one kill her, she was to be suspended by the tail, with her head touching an even floor, and then the offender was to pour wheat corn over her, till the heap reached high enough to conceal the tip of her tail.

The dog was treated with less respect, unless when regularly trained for hunting, or guarding sheep and cattle. He might be taken by stealth from his master with impunity, and be retained at the pleasure of the thief, in defiance of him; or he might be killed, if caught at a certain short distance from his master's dwelling. A dog accustomed to bite, and that should tear people three times, if not killed by his master, was by law to be tied to his masters foot at two spans distant, and in that manner be killed, and beside the chance of accidents to the master from the fury of his dog thus fastened to him, he was to give three kine as satisfaction for the wrong to the king.

Money lending on pledges was recognised by those laws, and the regulations concerning it laid down distinctly, both as to the nature of the property so pledged, the state in which it was to be restored, and the interest allowable, in order to check the rapacity of usurers.

the

the ground plan of this relic appears completely circular. The whole consists of twenty-three stones, seventeen of which, standing at equal distances from each other, constitute the circle, and the rest compose an avenue conducting to the interior; this opening lies due west.

Narberth held forth no inducement to prolong our stay at this time, as we intended to reserve ourselves for an attentive survey of this spot till we should return from Tenby, when Narberth would be again included in our course. After taking a hasty dinner, our journey was therefore continued to Pembroke.

CHAP. XVIII.

Progress continued towards Pembroke city.—Cross a dreary heath.—Rich coal veins on the eastern confines of the county.—Woods.—Decay of the ancient forests of those parts.—Excursory glance over the distant landscapes.—Scenery enriched by the "land locked waters" of Milford Haven, and the Clethy.—Carew castle, a stately fabric:—floating tradition connected with its history;—marriage portion assigned with Nest, the daughter of prince Theodore, to Gerald.—Memoirs of Sir Rhys ap Thomas.—A grand military pageant celebrated on the anniversary of St. George, in Carew castle.—Sir John Perrot becomes lord of the estate:—reversion again to the Carew family.—Ruins of the castle described.—Lofty old British cross near the gateway.—Monumental inscriptions in Carew church.—Arrival at the place of destination.

TAKING the Pembroke road, we pass, in the

the first instance, over the gradual assent of a stretch of hilly land, at the foot of which, as it were in a bottom, half concealed, the town of Narberth recedes from view. Unfavourable, heavy roads attend us still. The country also as we advanced, under the sombrous influence of an atmosphere overcharged with clouds, appeared dull in the extreme.

After a while we entered upon the skirts of a sun burnt waste, most miserably deprived at this time of its only pleasing feature, the gorse; and blackened in patches with the marks of fire, in which it seemed to have but lately been consumed. This picture of desolation lay widely spread before us. But to this alone our attention was not confined. Our track laid now upon an elevation, which lifting the traveller above the common level, permits the eye to rove beyond the limits of this shadowy waste towards the distances, where, at intervals, it meets with

some relief in the picturesque strips of landscape that rise faintly upon the horizon.

Our observations in this excursion were directed principally to the course of the rich veins of coal that intersect this county. Coal pits, it should not be forgotten, have been worked, for an immemorial length of time, in many parts of Pembrokeshire, where as yet the veins appear to be inexhaustible. The vicinity of Jeffrayston, which the road leaves to the left, three miles to the west of Narberth, was famous for its coal pits three centuries ago. Again, at Loveston, on the other side of the river, which runs almost due east from Milford Haven, collieries were established very early, and also at Johnston, Frestrope, and Picton. Anciently the numerous forests which overran those parts, furnished wood in abundance for firing, and timber for every other useful purpose in which this commodity was employed in the country. The destruction of those forests in after-

after-times was no doubt the prelude to the important discovery of their valuable veins of coal. Not that we are to suppose the existence of this useful article in this spot was unknown before; that would be improbable, but we may easily conceive, they were not aware of their extent, till they were compelled to pursue them with perseverance for the sake of fuel. In the end those coal works proved so productive that they were able to export vast quantities of it to other parts of the country with great advantage. In the reign of Elizabeth these concerns received a severe check, a duty so enormous being imposed upon the coal, as to nearly ruin this valuable branch of trade in Pembrokeshire. The sum levied was four pence per barrel upon all coal raised and transported from the mines in any part of the realm, a sum amounting to almost as much as the price the coal itself had borne here before. But what was more severely felt, was the like custom imposed upon every barrel of culm as well; the price of which was

only

only one penny at that time, while the coal was six pence*. This heavy duty, so unequally laid on, was afterwards ameliorated, in consequence of which, the coal trade of Pembrokeshire again revived.—The hovilles, or fine ball, a compost of clay and culm, such as are used in Caermarthenshire, are the common fuel of the lower classes, in this part of the country, at the present time.

An accurate observer, in traversing this district, will see with pleasure, several fine plantations of wood in the eastern parts of Pembrokeshire. Towards the westward, on the contrary, most of the ancient forest lands have been long since stripped of their sylvan honours, and the lands themselves converted into arable or pasture, though from the natural poverty of the soil, not always with the best success.

Pressing onwards at a brisk pace, we had

* Owen's *MSS. Hist.* Pemb.

reason

reason afterwards to be better pleased with this journey. A sort of misty haze was observed to overspread the landscape to the westward, which we admired most, the remoter points of view were thus obscured; and the imagination left to picture to itself much more than the powers of plain perception could discover. This circumstance served to heighten the impressive aspect of those lovely bursts of scenery that opened to us between the nearer head lands as we approached the different branches of that prodigious body of waters, the haven of Milford.—The first glance obtained of these from the heights which we purposely ascended, was incomparably fine; it was a mazy scene of verdant hills, and clouds, and expansive waters, romantically concentrated, and breaking at once upon our admiring sight. The hilly shores, aided by the prevailing deception, appeared arranged in the attitude of mountains, shrinking midway into the waters, but enchaining still within their recesses, and

amidst

amidst their steeps and bending precipices, the further encroachment of the flood. Those headlands were chequered with a variety of verdure, and sprinkling of woods. The waters gleaming, transparent, green as the face of ocean, and partaking of all its brilliancy, yet unrippled, waveless, placid as so many mountain lakes. The clouds that hovered upon these scenes, improved this sport of accident, as they lent an air of wild disorder to the prospects, which in themselves possess no other trait of grandeur than is derived from the magnificence of those inland sheets of water. The haziness was not confirmed, it cast a dismal stretch of shadow, but that shade was partial, broken, and involving only certain objects. Sometimes the clouds would break. Then the rays of light darting through the gloom, would be seen flitting hastily from one point to another, as if eager, when liberated, to illumine, in the purest taste of nature, a stretch of prospects bordering on sublimity.—At other periods we have passed in

view

view of those vagarious branches of Milford Haven, without being inclined to detract materially from the first impression they excited. These are always grand: they suggest the idea of so many inland lakes, being, to all appearance, circumscribed within the sinous limits of their shores in every direction, and in this case they would be superior in magnitude at least to any object of the kind in Britain.

A creek of this haven flows by Carew, upon the bank of which, in a low position, stands the noble shell of Carew castle; a princely structure, whose ruins has more than once attracted me to this spot of Pembrokeshire.

From a transient glimpse of this ruin, such as is commanded from the Pembroke road, which winds along the side of the stream in front of it, we were induced, without alighting from our chaise, to acquiesce in sentiment with

with those who pronounce the building to be not much, if at all, earlier than the reign of Henry the seventh. The exterior aspect has been so completely ornamented with handsome bows of windows, and other architectural decorations of that age, as to warrant that opinion. We recollected that an accurate observer * entertained the same idea, which tended to confirm that notion, and we accordingly drove on satisfied it must be so, without inspecting it.—Other journies, in which this castle has been regarded with more attention, enables me however to correct an opinion so unfounded, for we are not authorised by circumstances to detract so materially from the age of this memorial of antiquity.

So far from this being the sole labour of an individual age, we must not hesitate to allow, that no edifice of a military nature in the Principality, exhibits such a variety of dissimilar architecture, as Carew castle: none

* Wyndham, Vide his Tour through Wales.

proves

proves more clearly to be the work of different ages, very distinct from each other. There can be no question as to which are the remains of the earliest part of this construction, or which the latest, and the intermediate periods to which the rest should be referred, may be in a certain measure estimated by the same criterion also, the style of masonry. The most ancient parts of the works were evidently designed for strength; they were most likely erected in times of the greatest peril, about the æra of the Norman conquest, and they are really such as were likely to resist the attacks of a potent enemy: witness the ponderous walls, the enormous circular bastions, the massive walls, and diminutive openings. While on the contrary, all the later repairs were only calculated to soften its warlike aspect, and render it a more commodious place of residence, suitable to the taste, the ease, and dignity of a powerful lord, at a time the dangers of hostility had subsided.

One

One portion of the ancient fabric, perhaps coeval with the first erection, remains still in a tolerable state of preservation; this comprises part of the north west, and north east walls, contiguous to the fine airy range of buildings, that presents a front altogether different from the rest of the edifice, and which is certainly the most modern of the whole.

Within the walls on the north-west side, is the ruin of a noble suite of antique buildings, to which the principal assent from the court yard was by a flight of steps, leading to a lofty portal that is still standing, but the steps are nearly destroyed. An easier access is afforded through the dilapidated wall below.—A more august picture than the romantic interior of this ruin presents, is not often seen. Here disorder reigns supreme: every circumstance assimilates with the indications of decay, in this portion of the venerable edifice, now tottering upon the verge of dissolution. This wing has contained upon the upper floor

an

an apartment of vast extent, a sort of banquet room to all appearance, that brought immediately to mind the grand hall of Conway castle. The latter is indeed constructed upon a more majestic scale, notwithstanding which, there are attendant features in the present, that render it, in my mind, more picturesque. The roof, like that of "Conway's mighty hall," has been borne on arches, the buttresses of which are yet affixed against the wall, but the lofty covering they supported, have long since fallen in, and now lie buried beneath the widely spreading herbage below. In the wreck occasioned by the overwhelming fall of ruins from above, the subterraneous caverns in the bottom were rudely broken into, the disclosure of whose gloomy recesses, the abode of darkness, improves, in a surprising manner, the solemnity of the picture. Even thus in ruins, all tokens of its past magnificence are not effaced; enough remains to inspire an involuntary thrill of awe, while in this hallowed solitude, and in fixt astonishment the imagination traces the momentous changes it has

undergone within the space of three centuries only, for scarcely has three centuries expired since Carew castle shone in all the pride and glory of baronial splendour.—Destructive time, what mighty effort canst thou not accomplish, to deride that ambition which revels in the heart of man!

In the suite of apartments on the opposite side of the court yard, another style of architecture prevails. Over the fire place, in one of the rooms seen through the windows of a contiguous part of the ruin, in winding up a stair case, is a handsome ornamented fire-place, bearing in the center the arms of Lancaster. The battlements above, to which those steps conduct, are pierced with lancets, for the discharge of arrows.

Descending again into the court yard, we proceeded at the north east end, into the more modern wing of the building, the front of which deceived us in the first approach to the castle. This elegant addition is built up against

against the outside of the old building, which it conceals effectually from without. The external front of a circular tower, to which the new apartments were attached, with great part of the curtain wall, is visible within.

The style of this additional wing determines the æra of it in a satisfactory manner. Still, however, it may be difficult to decide between two opinions, traditionally accredited as to whom we are to attribute its erection. It is thought this was effected by Sir Rhys ap Thomas, when, as Leland acquaints us, this "castel was repaired, or magnificently builded," by that knight. Other authorities affirm, that this addition was made to it by Sir John Perrot, to whom the castle was leased by Henry the eighth, for a term of years after the estate was confiscated and seized upon by that monarch. Only the shell remains, from which it appears the building was divided into two stories, independant of the offices on the ground floor. All the windows were large and

square, with intermediate frame work of fine free-stone, dividing them into rectangular compartments. Its external front is further ornamented with semicircular projections, or bows of windows, of a vast size. The first story appears to have been magnificently fitted up: there is in particular, a single column, the remains of one side of the fire place, modelled after the form of a Corinthian pillar.—A popular report prevails, that there was one room in this castle an hundred and two feet long, by twenty in width, built by Sir John Perrot, in which he entertained the duke of Ormond, in a sumptuous manner, in the year 1553. The probability of this is not to be contested, for an apartment even of such vast dimensions, might have been contained within the walls of this wing of the castle*.

* Mr. Evans, who in his Cambrian Itinerary has reduced blundering to a sort of system, when speaking of Carew castle, mentions such a room, with its attendant circumstances, p. 158, forgetting, no doubt, that only twelve pages before he had detailed exactly the same story as relating to an apartment in the castle of Tenby!—And further proceeds to tell us, that Tenby is situated on a branch of Milford Haven!—So much for judicious compilations, and the instruction to be derived from them by actual travellers.

Modern

Modern tourists, unwilling to search beyond the trammels of the readiest authority, give an easy assent to the notions of Grose, who, upon the credit of Camden, states, that Carew castle belonged originally to the princes of South Wales: by one of whom, Rhys ap Theodore, it was assigned, with divers other valuable possessions, to Gerald de Carrio, as a marriage portion with Nest his daughter. But this opinion will more conveniently introduce itself, when we consider the history of Pembroke castle, which also belonged to Gerald.—Grose is correct in other points. Gerald, as he says, was lieutenant in Pembrokeshire for Henry the first. His descendants, by the name of Carew, possessed it for several generations, till Sir Edmond Carew mortgaged it to Sir Rhys ap Thomas. After its alienation to the crown on the attainder of Rice Griffith, the lineal descendant of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, it was leased for a term of years to Sir John Perrot, and others, the remainders of which were purchased by Sir

John Carew, kinsman and heir to that Sir Edmond who mortgaged it to Sir Rhys. Being thus possessed of the seat of his ancestors, Sir John Carew obtained the fee simple of it from Charles the first; from which period, till the middle of the last century, it remained, with little interruption, in the possession of the Carew family. After being held in litigation some time, the estate and castle was finally awarded to the claim of a Mr. Carew, in the year 1724. The castle, as we learnt on the spot, belongs at present to a gentleman in Somersetshire, of the name of Bernath, or Bernard.

Carew castle was the favourite residence of Sir Rhys ap Thomas at the time that Henry the seventh ascended the throne of England. In this place he celebrated the anniversary of St. George, upon receiving the order of the garter, with a degree of munificence that excited astonishment, and which continued long to be the theme of admiration throughout

out the country. The fete began upon the eve of St. George's day, and was afterwards kept up for five successive days, during which time an immense number of the relations of Sir Rhys, his friends, and visitors, assembled from all parts, were entertained in a style of princely hospitality, the higher ranks within the castle, and the others in pavillions and tents, pitched in the park adjoining to the castle.

The pageant was chiefly of a military nature, as might be presumed from the character of Sir Rhys. Intimation had been publickly given of this intended celebration of the anniversary of the British Mars, in which tilts and tournaments should be solemnly held as a trial of abilities in the feats of arms, and to which all knights were invited for this purpose. This being the first regular exhibition of the kind ever seen in Wales, it drew vast numbers to the spot. Among many other valiant heroes who graced the military

spectacle, was Sir Griffith Rhys, the son of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, Sir John Perrot, Sir William Wogan, and Arnold Butler, of Dunravon, old commanders, and expert in the art of war. The fete commenced with the sound of drums and trumpets, and with the discharge of musquetry; and continued to be celebrated with processions, and in the exercise of the men at arms; in tilts and tournaments, and various other warlike recreations; or, for the amusement of others, with theatricals, performed within the apartments of the castle.

The church of Carew contains some monumental inscriptions of curiosity. But besides these the admirer of antique remains, should not omit observing a lofty stone cross, of an early date, standing on the road side close to the wall of the castle grounds. The sketch delineated in the plate, may supersede the necessity of a more copious description. It consists only of a single stone, fourteen feet

feet in height, three feet or more in breadth at the base, and better than one in thickness. The compartments into which the sculptor has divided the face of the stone, is enriched with involuted lines, and other devices in use about the fifth century, to which æra we can entertain no great doubt but it may be referred with safety. Some of the compartments have been charged with rude inscriptions in the old British character, but time has obliterated most of these, and rendered the rest unintelligible. Except in having the inscriptions defaced, this is indisputably the most complete and perfect specimen of an ancient British cross the traveller will meet with at this time in Wales.

Laurenny, a charming seat, and in a situation the most beautiful that can be imagined, is observed across the haven of Milford from the hills above Carew.—Five miles beyond the castle, the Narberth road enters the city of Pembroke.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Town of Pembroke.—Its ancient castle, a Norman edifice:—Ruins of the queen's nursery, or Henry the seventh's chamber.—Prodigious strong tower:—Dilapidated chapel.—Magazine.—Incidents relative to the siege of this formidable fortress, by Cromwell.—Descent along the creek of Milford Haven to the Hogan.—Arnulph de Montgomery, the first earl of Pembroke.—Gerald de Carrio defends Arnulph's castle of Pembroke against Cadogan ap Blethyn, in the absence of his lord.—Defection of Arnulph, and his brother Robert de Blesmo from the English monarchy, when Henry the first seized upon the throne.—Robert defeated, and banished.—Arnulph compelled to retire after his brother to Normandy.—Recompense to Jorwerth ap Blethyn for deserting the confederacy.—Pembroke estates conferred on Saer:—capriciously taken again from Saer, and

and bestowed on Gerald.—Castle rebuilt by Gerald.—Historical doubts respecting the two castles of Pembroke and Carew,—and the Carew family.—Atrocious outrage: Nest, the beautiful wife of Gerald, carried off by force with her children from Pembroke castle; —Signal instance of revenge obtained by Gerald.—Events of moment connected with the history of the castle in later times.—Orders for dismantling it, put in force by Cromwell.—The old fortifications of the town of Pembroke.—Religious institutions.—Trade and manufacture of the place.—Advantageous situation for an extensive commerce neglected.—Natural history.

OUR day's excursion, after amusing ourselves for some time in the village of Carew, terminated in an interesting ramble about the town of Pembroke, which place we entered rather late in the afternoon, and not a little weary

weary with the perpetual uneasy jostlings received in traversing the rugged roads along which our route had lain since we first set out upon our expedition in the morning.

The Green Dragon, an establishment that wears the appearance of having witnessed better days, is the principal house of public entertainment in Pembroke. To this we repaired and were welcomed with attention by an agreeable girl of very pleasing manners, the youthful partner, as we afterwards understood, of our obliging hostess, who is an elder sister, and in whose absence this fair damsel officiated as mistress of the house. It would be indeed fastidious to complain of our accommodations here, in addition to the civility we experienced; they were plain and good, and the charges very reasonable.

But there is one circumstance to be mentioned still, in which the traveller cannot be so easily provided for. We learnt, with some surprise,

surprise, that the county town of the wealthy shire of Pembroke, being seldom the object of a visit with strangers, could neither furnish us with chaise, or saddle horses for hire, to renew our journey; so that in the event of not having our own with us, if we had been incautious enough to dismiss those which brought us thither, we must have dispatched a messenger on purpose back to Narberth or to Milford for others, or have been compelled to continue our journey from Pembroke on foot.—It will not be amiss to mention this circumstance for the information of such future tourists as may entertain no great predilection for pedestrian excursions, at least along the main roads; a style of travelling the latter, I must again repeat, that is not considered so respectable in Wales as may be conceived, notwithstanding all that has been advanced in its favour, and the ill effects of which, in point of comfort, we experienced once or twice ourselves, in a manner too forcible to be easily effaced from recollection.

The

The ruins of Pembroke's "mighty fortress" were among the principal objects to arrest attention on our arrival. For some time we were debarred entrance: the gates were locked, and the key not easily to be found. We therefore strolled through the north gate of the town, which is yet in tolerable condition, down to the bridge, with the intention of surveying them on the side next the water, from which position they certainly appear uncommonly grand. In the mean time, one of the domestics of the inn obtained the key, and hastening in search of us, proffered his attendance as our conductor. Local information, however trifling, ought never to be disregarded by strangers. I conceived his knowledge might assist our speculations, and his services be acceptable. We therefore all three returned in company to the castle, amid the majestic ruins of which, and in the Hogan, upon the banks of the river we sauntered in the cool of the evening, till the close of day even-

eventually put a period for that time to our further observations.

The style of architecture which prevails in this edifice, is that most commonly denominated the Anglo-Norman, with an intermixture of the early gothic, and whether we admit Arnulph de Montgomery, Gerald de Carrio, or any other particular individual to be the founder, it is consistent with the plainest evidence to believe, that it was erected about the end of the eleventh, or beginning of the twelfth century.

The entrance is from the town, through a noble gateway, a fragment of the ancient out-works of prodigious strength, guarded on each side by a circular tower. It would seem that no precaution further was thought necessary to encrease the strength of the fortress on this side when the gates were shut, since it was not even surrounded by a moat, and is scarcely raised above the level of the street.

This

This entrance, report affirms, to have been guarded formerly with six massive gates of iron. There are evidently as many grooves, both in the sides and roof of the archway, as were necessary for the reception of that number of gates, with intervening spaces above, from whence the defenders of the place could pour down scalding water, or lead, upon the besiegers, should they succeed in forcing any of them open. This alone may serve to convey an accurate idea of the strength of the original fortification. All the walls are of an amazing thickness, and some of the towers, especially, seem still likely to endure for ages

Among the ruins are shewn the mutilated walls of a small apartment, called the queen's nursery, or Henry the seventh's chamber, from the circumstance of this being the birth place of that fortunate monarch! Leland, who visited this spot in the reign of Henry the eighth, saw this room in a very different

different condition from that which it now exhibits; his words are these:—"In the utter ward I saw the chambre wher king Henri the 7th was borne, in knowledge whereof a chymmeney is new made with arms and badges of king Henri the 7th."—The fire-place remains, but not the arms, or emblems of royalty, which were most likely destroyed by Cromwell, when the parliamentary forces took possession of the castle. Part of the old wainscotting, curiously ornamented with carved work, remained so lately as the middle of the last century, if we are not misinformed; but no trace of this is visible now that we could observe. The shattered walls of seven rooms, are yet extant within the ruin: that of the kitchen, as it is called, and the old chapel is well worth inspecting.

The great double tower, or keep, presents a more extraordinary example of the ancient military architecture, than we could possibly have conceived. Its haughty grandeur rivets

the spectator, at the first glance to the spot, with silent astonishment. Such was the prodigious strength and solidity of its construction, that it bade defiance, according to the popular tradition, to every attempt of the republican forces under Cromwell, to destroy it, though they attempted several times to blow it up with gunpowder. The walls are blackened with smoke in various parts within, betraying, to all appearance, the effects of fire, or of an explosion perhaps of gunpowder, and which are shewn in confirmation of the veracity of the tale before related.

This gigantic structure is completely insulated from the rest of the works, rising within the area of the castle to the height of seventy five feet, according to the common estimate, which strangers must take for granted *: as to

* From an old etching, supposed to have been executed by Hollar, it appears that the base of this tower is in a great measure buried beneath the surface of the earth by which it is now surrounded. In the print alluded to, the tower is represented with a prodigious shelving

to the proportions below, these may be ascertained with greater precision. The form is circular, the diameter of which is twenty-five feet and an half within the interior of the tower, and the walls are nearly seventeen feet in thickness at the level of ground. This tower was originally divided into five stories, including the bottom apartment. The light was sparingly admitted into each, through the deep avenues pierced in the sides. The entrance is small and low. Upon the right hand we perceived a winding flight of ruinous steps, which lead by secret passages within the walls from one story to another, till they reach the summit. One circumstance is remarkable: Leland speaking of it, says, "the toppe of this round towr is gatherid with a

ing or pyramidal base, nearly equal to a fifth part of the present height. The summit is also very different, the etching exhibiting three tier of battlements, the lowermost one of which projects in a slight degree over the edge of the wall: the second rising within the first is smaller, and the third is still more diminished. Each of these battlements are pierced with a range of apertures, the aspect of which must have been formidable indeed when guarded by the archers. It is supposed the stone covering laid within the third or uppermost course of battlements.

roof of stone almost *in conum*, the toppe whereof is keverid with a flat mille stone," and the appearance of the tower to the spectator, looking upwards, precisely corresponds with this description; the vaulted stone-work of the roof, and the incumbent slab of stone, being still in the same position. Unless Leland ascended the tower to observe the singular construction of this roof, which he does not say, we should be almost inclined to believe the four floorings, the recesses of which are evidently visible in the walls, were destroyed or removed before the time of Henry the eighth.

A breach in one of the walls is pointed out as the effect of a heavy cannonade from a battery opened on an eminence to the eastward by Cromwell's soldiers. The castle, before that time, namely in 1648, had been taken from the royalists, and being put into a state of repair, was garrisoned by the parliamentary forces, under the command of colonels

colonels Langhorne, Powel, and Payer. These officers conceiving themselves not to be sufficiently rewarded for their services during the war, determined to declare for king Charles the moment they should receive intelligence that the Scots in favour of the royal cause had entered the English borders. By some means, however, their secret design transpired, and all their hopes were disconcerted by the unexpected arrival of a new commandant, who was authorised to take possession of the town and castle. No alternative remained between submission, which might lead to further detection and punishment, or open resistance to the orders of the parliament. The latter was determined on. They refused admittance to the commandant, declaring themselves at the same time in favour of the king, and in consequence of this, hostilities commenced immediately. For the space of four months they defended the place with the greatest bravery. At last Cromwell appeared in person, which so far inspired the

rebel army with confidence, that the works were carried on with vigour, and they began to make some impression upon this stupendous fortress. Cromwell was astonished, however, at the obstinacy of the garrison. He knew they were but indifferently provided with provisions in the outset, and had thought it possible to starve them into a capitulation, but in this he failed. The garrison was for a long time supplied with fresh water, which, as the story tells, was conveyed to them from the monastery of St. Nicholas, or Monkton, on the other bank of the creek of Milford Haven, by means of pipes of lead carried through the bridge. This secret was at length betrayed, when Cromwell ordered the pavement of the bridge to be torn up in search of them. The pipes were accordingly found, and being destroyed, the garrison was left destitute of water. But this did not reduce them to obedience: they held out till their provisions were nearly exhausted, and their ammunition stores so far wasted that they were obliged to fire with

stones

stones and pebbles instead of ball upon the besiegers. Many of these stones lie scattered about the area of the castle even now.

When Cromwell had effected the breach in the wall in the spot before mentioned, and his forces were on the point of storming, the gallant garrison were compelled to surrender at discretion. The two principals, Langhorne and Powel, by some connivance, escaped punishment; but poor Payer, being of the least consequence, expiated the offence with the sacrifice of his life, for he was beheaded as a traitor for it in Covent Garden.—The tower of St. Mary's church, which stands near the middle of the town, betrays the marks of violence it sustained from the cannon balls fired in this memorable siege.

Adjoining to the left side of the gate way, as you pass out of the castle, stands the magazine, a structure of great strength, built nearly upon the same plan as the double tower, but on a smaller scale; the

interior of which has been divided into four stories by means of three different floors. When the parliamentary mandates decreed the dissolution of this castle, their forces, we are told, made several attempts to blow it up with gunpowder. In this respect they were rather more successful than with the double tower, for besides demolishing the interior, the explosion shattered the walls considerably.

A slippery pathway carried along the verge of the rock on which the castle stands, on the outside of the walls, conducts to the celebrated cavern, called the Hogan, or Wogan, which lies directly under the castle. The opening to this excavation faces the river, on which side we are to imagine it was formerly strengthened by outworks. The cavern itself, whether natural, or artificial, and I am rather inclined to believe the latter, was certainly intended for a sally port: there was anciently a communication between the cavern and the castle above, by means of a winding staircase, that

that seems to confirm the truth of this opinion, some vestiges of which yet remain. A more gloomy receptacle than the Hogan, at the hour we descended into it, cannot be well conceived. We could just discern, by the aid of the ruddy gleams of light that broke from the westward, obliquely, through its diminutive entrance, that its form was nearly circular. The sides and roof are rudely arched, and the whole cavity appears to have been hollowed out of the solid rock. The dimensions of this dismal cavern, if the veracity of our attendant can be relied upon, is seventy-five feet in length, and forty-five feet in breadth, measuring across the widest part. This assertion I can neither confirm, nor contradict, for the place was so filthy with the dung of cattle, that neither me, nor my fellow-traveller, were disposed to examine it with much attention. We could form a better opinion of its echo, which, though tolerably strong, is not very distinct.

Grose has inadvertently mistaken one passage in the Welsh historian, Caradoc of Lhancarvan, respecting this castle. He adduces, on the authority of this writer, that it was originally founded by Arnulph, the son of Roger de Montgomery, earl of Shrewsbury, in the reign of William the Conqueror, anno 1094*.—Caradoc, on the contrary, informs us, that it was in such a state of defence, two or three years before that time, that Cadogan ap Blethyn, prince of Powis, who then ruled in South Wales had ravaged Cardigan and Pembrokeshire, and destroyed all the castles, and fortifications of the English and Norman settlers, except two, which were *impregnable*, and these were no others than the two castles of Pembroke and Rydcors. Historic evidence does not, permit us to believe that it was built before the conquest of Glamorganshire, for it is well known Arnulph did homage for his lands in Pembrokeshire to William Rufus, immediately after that event in 1090.

* Antiquities of Wales.

For

For the space of nearly ten years Arnulph was possessed of Pembroke castle. In 1100 he is styled the earl of Pembroke. During this year he took up arms, in conjunction with his brother Robert de Blesmo, against Henry the First, for usurping the throne of Robert, the eldest of the Conqueror's sons, upon the death of William Rufus. Henry sent them a gracious message to come before him and declare the nature of their grievances, with a promise of redress, if possible. But this they evaded with slight excuses, and in the mean time strengthened themselves to the utmost, by raising forces, fortifying their castles and strong holds, and securing the alliance of several of the most powerful of the Cambrian chieftains;—means by which they at length became so formidable that Henry was alarmed for the consequences of his delay, and determined immediately to march in person with an army against them.

The earl had sent Gerald his steward but a short

short time before to ask the daughter of Murkart, king of Ireland, in marriage. This request was granted, together with a promise of great succours to strengthen the alliance, and carry on the war with vigour against king Henry. Gerald returning, had taken charge of the castle, and Arnulph was himself gone to Ireland to bring home his bride and the supplies, when king Henry entered the country of his brother Robert, the earl of Shrewsbury.

King Henry soon won the castle of Shrewsbury and Tenkenhill, and then laid siege to that of Brugge. But he still more weakened the strength of the confederates by corrupting the integrity of Jorwerth, their most powerful ally among the Welsh, with large promises of reward, for the sake of which he deserted their cause. The rest were intimidated by this conduct, and Robert, the brother of Arnulph, perceiving but too clearly that his fortune was hopeless, agreed to lay down his

his arms, upon condition the king would permit him to depart the realm in safety. This was granted, and Robert immediately after sailed for Normandy. Henry being thus far released from his alarms, sent a peremptory message to Arnulph, either to follow his brother, or deliver himself up to his mercy. Arnulph not caring to trust to the royal clemency of Henry, chose rather to comply with the conditions of banishment, and peace being thus restored, the castle and estates of Pembroke were again in the power of the king, and at his disposal.

These estates, with other large possessions, had been expressly promised to Jorwerth, as a recompense for deserting the alliance of the two earls. The estates of Pembroke were in fact the rightful inheritance of Jorwerth at the very period they were granted by William Rufus to Arnulph de Montgomery; and it was therefore only something more than the restoration of his own property the king had

pledged

pledged himself to grant this leader. All things being settled by the banishment of Arnulph, Jorwerth lost no time in hastening up to London with the view of reminding his majesty of the reward expected for his services. But Henry had no more hesitation now in violating the promise made in the hour of danger, than he had before in offering it. His object was attained. The rebellion was subdued, and the king, entertaining no further fears on that head, not only refused the request of Jorwerth, but to silence him the more effectually, granted the estates to another person.—Nor was this all; to encrease his mortification, the very next year the king cited Jorwerth to appear at Shrewsbury, to attend at a pretended consultation about the affairs of Wales, and then, to the surprise of every one, attainted him of high treason! For this supposed offence he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and probably he might have lingered in confinement the rest of his days, if he had not consented afterwards

to

to purchase his liberty of the king for a handsome ransom. The sum stated was three hundred pounds, a weighty consideration in those times, and this being paid, he was released.—Jorwerth, or as the Welsh writers call him, Jorwerth ap Bleddyn, was a chieftain of Powis land, as well as of South Wales. He lived ten years after the rebellion of the earls, for he was treacherously murdered by Llywarch ap Trahairn, in 1110.

But to resume the former subject.—Saer, to whom the estates of Pembroke were given, did not enjoy them above a year or two before the fickle monarch, upon some dislike, took them again to himself and bestowed them on Gerald, the man who had been Arnulph's steward, and deputy governor of Pembroke castle.

Gerald had entered before that time into a matrimonial alliance with Nest, the daughter of Rhys, prince of South Wales, which, raising him to importance in the affairs of that

that country, might possibly operate as a principal inducement with Henry to cement the cordiality of all parties, by appointing him for his lieutenant in those parts. This appointment was accompanied with a grant of the Pembroke estates, but without conferring the title of earl upon him.

This brings us to a period in which, by an ambiguous passage in Caradoc, we learn that Pembroke castle was rebuilt by Gerald *.

The

* The passage alluded to, mentions the re-edification of Pembroke castle, in the year 1105. According to this writer, "when king Henry granted the country of Rhos, in Pembrokeshire, or West Wales, to the Flemings, Gerald, the king's lieutenant, was determined to be aforehand with them, and *rebuilt the castle of Pembroke, in a place called Congarth Fechan*, whither he removed his family, and all his goods." From the word rebuilt, it may be inferred, that this new erection might possibly have been established upon the site of the former castle of Pembroke, but on the contrary, as there could then have been no occasion to name the place where the second castle was built, it is far more likely that some other spot was chosen.

Giraldus, or as he is usually called, Giraldus Cambrensis, an ancient writer, who lived about that time, informs us, that the first castle of Pembroke was only a slight work of turf and twigs; and which Grose believes was afterwards rebuilt by Gerald, on account of its weakness, or, as some say, from its having been destroyed by fire." Had Mr. Grose been more conversant with the history of those days, he could not have thought that such a temporary structure was the only

fortress

The new castle, according to his account, was finished in 1136, at which time Gerald removed, with his goods and all his family, into it. But

fortress in the possession of the valiant earl of Pembroke, to secure the conquests he had made of that country.—Can it be seriously conceived for a moment, that the *castle* built by Arnulph de Montgomery, and dignified with the title of Pembroke castle, the *impregnable* † fortress, that with one exception alone, that of Rhydeors, withstood the mighty forces of Cadgwan ap Blethyn; which had before resisted the united armies of the North and South Wallian princes; and had lastly hurled defiance at the whole prowess of the English monarchy in the confederacy against Henry the first, could be a *slight work*, composed only of *turf* and *twigs?*

But we will take the authority of this same Giraldus, on whose ambiguous mode of expression this idea is founded, altogether, and from that alone endeavour to shew that besides this *slight* work, there must have been another of prodigious strength, such as was capable of withstanding the powerful means opposed to it on the occasions before mentioned.—Perhaps, however, the remark of Giraldus ought not to be considered separately from other authorities of acknowledged veracity, except in the first instance, lest the conclusions drawn from thence should be thought suspicious.—Gerald, we are to remember, was married to Nest, the daughter of Rhys ap Theodore, and tradition says, he received Carew castle as a marriage portion with her. Hence it does appear, that Gerald was at one time of his life in possession of both this castle and that of the present Pembroke. Were we then to admit, instead of this tradition in its literal sense, something nearer to presumptive evidence, we might believe, that instead of receiving Carew castle as a marriage portion from Rhys with his daughter, that he had this from his royal master, Henry the first; and that Carew castle

† Caradoc.

But he was not long permitted to remain in quiet possession of it. Cadwgan ap Blethyn, who was then at peace with him, having prepared

was in fact the fortress built by Arnulph de Montgomery, and originally known by the name of Pembroke castle.

The arguments to support this conjecture, if not entirely convincing, are not without their weight.—In the first place, nothing can be more clear than that some edifice existed under the name of Pembroke castle before the year 1105, the avowed æra of the present building of that name, because it is explicitly mentioned by the Welsh historians both in the years 1092 and 1094.—That it was a place of uncommon strength, nay, even that it was *impregnable* in the earliest of those times, is equally certain from the eventful history of that period.—And that the present edifice of Pembroke castle arose neither on the foundation of the ancient structure of that name, nor on any other stupendous fortification, but on a slight work, we have the evidence of Giraldus. For what reason are we to believe that Arnulph would neglect to employ the same means for the security of his possessions as the other Norman lords, who at the same period seized upon territories in South Wales: that they built strong castles for this purpose, no one can dispute, why then imagine that Arnulph, who had as much to defend as they, and still more from his remote position in the country, stood in greater danger from the resistance of the Welsh, should have never provided himself with any better kind of defence than the slight work before mentioned. As this would be inconsistent with his military character, we must conclude, without either adverting even to the events of the year 1092 or 1094, that the castle of Pembroke built by Arnulph, was a fortress of similar strength with the other Norman castles erected in South Wales at that time. The style of masonry, and every other circumstance observable in the ancient parts of Carew castle, perfectly accords with this conclusion, and leads us to believe this must have been the original Pembroke castle.

To-

pared a sumptuous entertainment at Christmas, invited all the lords in the neighbourhood of his house, at Dyfed, to partake of it; and among

To demolish such a fortress as that first erected under the name of Pembroke, must have evidently been, from the events connected with its history before mentioned; and that with no other view than to build another on the spot, would have been absurdity in the extreme in Gerald. It is probable on the contrary, that he resided in the old castle while the present was building, and this being designed for his future residence, in preference to that built by Arnulph, might have been afterwards dignified with the title of Pembroke castle, at the expence of the former.

This suggestion may require other arguments to countenance it, and one, at least presents itself.—"The *Carews*," says Camden, after Leland, "affirm themselves to have been originally called *Montgomery*, and to be the descendants of Arnulph de Montgomery, the founder of Pembroke castle †." This is true, and is it not then equally probable that the name of Montgomery's castle should be changed to Carew, as that of the descendants of his family?—Whatever might have been the occasion of this transition in one, might it not have operated on the other?—This idea receives additional confirmation, when it is recollected that the building which afterwards bore the name

† "*Carew* trew name Montgomerik; and he is writen thus in old evidence (evidences), Montgomerik Dns de Carew." *Leland.*

It should, however, be observed at the same time, that Gerald, who is sometimes called by old writers Giraldus, and Giraldus de Windsor is also named by others Gerald de Carrio, and from the last it has been thought his descendants took the surname of Carrio, which, by an easy transition, would become Carew. The Geralds, Giraldines, and Fitzgeralds, trace their descent from the same source.

of

among others, Owen, the son of the hospitable chieftain who resided at Powis, was one of the visitors. This young man heard the wife of

of Pembroke, and which retains it to this day, was evidently the work of Gerald, and not of Arnulph.

Admitting this, we are neither to lose sight of the tradition, nor of the marriage portion given by Rhys ap Theodore with his daughter. —"When king Henry (says Caradoc) gave the country of Rhos, in Pembrokeshire, to the Flemings, Gerald was determined to be aforehand with them by building a castle."—Now this was, no doubt, a castle to secure the lands he received from his father-in-law, Rhys ap Theodore; since he could have no reason to apprehend these poor people, driven from their native home by a dreadful inundation, and indebted solely to the bounty of Henry for a land to inhabit, would dare attempt to deprive him of what he held only in trust for their royal benefactor, which would have been the case if they had presumed to rob him of the lands belonging to the earldom of Pembroke; and upon these only we ought to look for Arnulph's castle.—Here then we are to imagine the castle of turf and twigs was no other than a *British fortification* upon the lands given to him by Rhys, and which, occupying a desirable situation, Gerald might prefer for the scite of his newly intended castle. Such a position as that on which the castle of Pembroke at present stands, would unquestionably have determined his choice in favour of it; and no one appears inclined to dispute that the present castle of Pembroke was erected by him at that time, although his motives for so doing seems to have been mistaken.—As a further confirmation of the conjecture, it is evident that the most ancient parts of Carew castle is built in the very style of the Norman edifices introduced into this country at the time of the Norman conquest, and certainly not in such a style as would have been pursued by a *Welsh* prince of that period. There is nothing in the appearance of the oldest parts of Carew castle, that can induce

of Gerald so universally admired for her beauty, that he became anxious to see her. He was distantly related to her, and with very little ceremony, therefore, took the liberty of paying her a visit, under the profession of friendship and respect. The interview was unfortunate.—He found her charms excel if possible all that report had said of her. The abandoned profligate, in a word, became enamoured with her, and resolved that very night to carry her off from her husband. To perpetrate this design, he contrived to enter privately at the hour of midnight, by a secret passage through the walls into the castle, with a strong party of headstrong youths, whom he had engaged to assist him, at all hazards, in this perilous

duce a belief of it's being erected by Rhys ap Theodore, while on the contrary, every circumstance in its style of building, as well as the events of history connected with it, seem to prove that it was the original Pembroke castle built by Arnulph.

But after all, to conclude this long digression, as I cannot but be aware that the enquiry is still involved in some obscurity, for the want of sufficient *data* to reason on, the preceding observations are brought forward as opinions merely, and that with becoming deference to any historic facts that have escaped research, or more plausible conjecture that may be advanced hereafter.

enterprise. With some difficulty they passed the walls, and gaining possession of the place without being observed, they proceeded to that part where Gerald and his wife lay, which they encompassed, and directly set on fire. Gerald hearing a noise, wished to go out to know the cause of it, but his wife, more prudent, and suspecting some treachery from the uproar, prevailed upon him to escape by a private way, and then ventured herself to make the enquiry.

The party with Owen, replied only by breaking forcibly into the chamber, in which they made diligent search after Gerald, with intent to murder him, but by the time they gained admittance, his escape was effected. Seeing, therefore, their search for Gerald was fruitless, they took his wife, and two sons, together with a son and daughter by a concubine; and after setting the rest of the castle in flames, bore them off in triumph to Powis. Remonstrances and entreaties were

of

of no avail afterwards: Owen did, at the pressing solicitation of his father, Cadwgan, condescend indeed to send the children back to their father, but could on no account be induced to part with the lady.

Gerald, though burning with revenge for this cruel and unprovoked aggression, sought in vain for eight tedious years the means of gratifying it: delay and shame but increased its fury, and the moment he had so long panted after, at last arrived.—Owen had been taken in favour by king Henry, and in conjunction with Llywarch ap Trahairn, another leading man in the country, was desired to employ their utmost endeavours to take, or kill, one Gryffydh ap Rhys, who had done much mischief to the English. Not a little proud of this occasion to manifest his zeal in obeying king Henry's pleasure, Owen marched immediately to a place called Stratywys, where it had been rumoured Gryffydh was concealed. In order to intimidate any one from assisting

Gryffydh, Owen vowed that neither man, woman, nor child, should escape alive if he did not find him; neither did he seem inclined to break his promise, for he slew, or put to flight, all that he met with, or overtook in scowering about the woods.

Gerald, being the king's lieutenant, was also at the same time out with a great force to seek the rebel. While on his march he heard that Owen was in the woods with only a small party of his men. This was a favourable opportunity for taking Owen by surprise, and he resolved to improve it to his advantage.—Owen was warned by his followers that a considerable body of soldiers were approaching and advised by them to retreat, but perceiving it was Gerald and his men on the same pursuit as himself, he disregarded their advice; presuming, as he was now the friend of Henry, Gerald, whom he had so grievously injured, must be his friend also. Under this idea he advanced immediately to meet them, when Gerald's men

men saluted him with a shower of arrows.—"Ye are but Flemings," exclaimed Owen, with exulting temerity, "and as such will always tremble at my name:" but scarcely had the words transpired from his lips, when an arrow pierced his heart!

The authority of several writers might be advanced, to shew that Richard de Clare, or Strongbow, is generally considered as the first earl of Pembroke; but it has been already seen, that Arnulph de Montgomery bore that title, at least by courtesy, before the time of Strongbow. Saler, the successor of Arnulph, and Gerald after him, do not appear to have received the honours of the earldom, although possessed of the estates. By what means Gerald, or his descendants, for he had male children, were deprived of these lands, we are ignorant. Certain it is, that Gilbert, the father of Richard, the latter of whom Speed believes to have been the first earl of Pembrokeshire, with a strong force seized upon this

this country in the year 1144, and in consequence of that conquest, if we are not mistaken, the title of earl of Pembroke was conferred upon him by king Stephen *. Gilbert was succeeded by Richard de Clare, his son, in the title and estates. In 1199 it devolved to the Marshalls, William of that name being the third earl by marriage with the heiress of Richard. In this family it rested till the reign of Henry the second, when the last of five sons, the offspring of that marriage, all of whom had been successively earls of Pembroke, dying without male issue, as was the

* A. D. 1141. Gilbert, earl of Clare, came with a great number of forces to Dyfed †, and built the castle of Caermardhyn, and the castle of the sons of Uchtryd ‡. The castle of Dynefawr also belonged, in 1145, to Gilbert Strongbow, *Caradoc.*—That this was the prevailing opinion with other Welsh writers, is evident. Owen clearly states "that Arnolph Montgomery, and Gilbert Strongbow came to Dyfet, or Pembrokeshire, and subduing it, planted there his Norman gentlemen, and others he brought with him, whose issues enjoy divers lordships and manors, then given to them by theire lordes to this day." Owen. MSS.

† Pembrokeshire, or in a general sense, a much wider extent of territory, including Caermarthenshire;—the limits of ancient Dyfed is not known with any great degree of accuracy.

‡ Llanstephan.

case

case with his four brothers, the earldom reverted again to the crown. Upon the extinction of the Marshall family, Henry the second granted the earldom to William Valence, who had married a niece of the last earl: this was in 1247. It is said Valence was succeeded by his son Amery, who defeated Robert Bruce of Scotland in 1306. Lawrence Hastings marrying lady Isabel, the heiress of Valence, became earl of Pembroke in 1339: his son John, and his grandson of the same name, were both earls of Pembroke in succession after his death. In 1414, Humphrey duke of Gloucester was earl of Pembroke. The next in succession was William de la Pole, or Poole Marque, earl of Suffolk. In the reign of Henry the sixth, Jasper, the son of Owen Tudor, half brother of the king, and uncle of Henry the seventh, was created earl of Pembroke. Jasper Hatfield is named by some as his successor. In 1468 Sir William Herbert, for his great services against Jasper Tudor, and the earl of Ormond,

received

received the title of earl of Pembroke, in which he was succeeded by his son William; but the latter resigned it to Edward the fourth, in order that it might be conferred upon his son Edward, prince of Wales. Anne Bullen was marchioness of Pembroke in 1532. —In 1551 Edward the sixth conferred the title of earl of Pembroke on William Herbert, in whose posterity it continues to this time.

We are at liberty to form a pretty faithful idea of the ancient military works of the town and castle of Pembroke, from the observations of Leland; his words are these: "Pembroke castle standith upon an arme of Milford, the wich about e mild beyond the towne creketh in so, that it almost peninsulaleth the towne, that standith on a verri maine rokki ground."

"The toune is welle waullid, and hath 111 gates by est, west, and north, of which the

est

est gate is fairest, and strongest, having afore hit a compasid tour, not rofid, in the entering whereof is a portoclys *ex solido ferro* *.

"The castil standith hard by the waul on a hard rokke, and is veri larg and strong, being double wardid."—"In the bottom of the great strong tower in the inner ward is a marvellous vault caulid the Hogan."—"In the towne be ii paroche chirchis, and one in the suburbe."—"Montaine, a cell of blak monkes in the suburbe, is suppressed. The towne

* The accuracy of this account is corroborated in a very consistent manner by an old engraving of Speed's, in which the plan of the ancient fortifications of the town and castle is clearly shown, as they stood before the civil wars in Charles the first's time. The outer walls, which were built in an angulated manner with flanks and bastions, in several places were further strengthened with massive towers. These enclosed an area of a form somewhat rectangular, the greatest length of which extended from east to west, this being the course of the main street as at present. There was a gate at the east end, and another at the west, close to the bridge now leading to Monkton. The third gate was that on the north side, which is still standing. The castle was not included within the town walls, but precisely occupied a corner without, then in the north west angle of the ground plan of the town. There were two crosses in the main street, the base of one of which still remains.

hath

hath been well buyldid, and est suburbe hath been almost as great as the town, but now yt is totally in ruine."

Travellers advancing to Pembroke by the way of Carew, have by no means the best distant prospect of the town, this being seen to infinitely greater advantage from the higher lands over which the road descends after passing from the ferry across the haven of Milford. On this side, as the road bends within sight of Pembroke, the opening view is spirited. The town lies in the midst of an extensive level country, terminated in the distance by an undulating range of placid hills. These, its softer features, are admirably contrasted with others of a more impressive aspect:—the shattered remnants of the hoary walls, the ivy mantled towers, and turrets of Pembroke castle, whose venerable ruins, mighty in decay, verge boldly to the edge of the rocks that overlook the river of Milford, and stand conspicuous in the front of the town.

town.—One cannot err on the side of a correct and judicious taste, in bestowing this tribute of praise upon the scenic grandeur of this spot, when it is remembered that Wilson's charming picture of Pembroke is taken from this position.

The town consists of scarcely more than a single street, which extends from east to west. On the westward it is connected with the village of Monkton by means of a bridge. There is a sprinkling of good houses in the main street towards the east end, the middle and west end are occupied by petty shop-keepers, who make some small shew of business, more especially on the saturday, which is their market day. There is no considerable manufactory carried on here, but there are a number of industrious mechanics, such as tailors, shoe-makers, sadlers, carpenters, black-smiths, and others, who practise their different callings in the town:—the place is not absolutely destitute of internal business in this respect, as some have represented. The

principal

principal church is St. Mary's, an old building, with a quadrangular tower, that stands near the market-house. There is another church towards the east end, dedicated to St. Michael. St. Nicholas's stands on the west side of the creek that separates Monkton from Pembroke.

The advantageous situation of Pembroke for an extensive commerce, has been generally admitted. Its position on one of the creeks of the great haven of Milford, is admirable for this purpose; and were the inhabitants disposed, with becoming spirit to promote its concerns in this way, Pembroke might one day rise to consideration. Its rivals on the opposite shores of Milford Haven, Haverford West, and the thriving town of Milford, have gradually engrossed the far greater portion of what little trade it possessed in former days, and reduced the county town of the shire to a comparative state of insignificance. The customs of the haven are still paid at

Pembroke.

Pembroke.—One circumstance, which it must be allowed is unavoidable, tends also to lessen its importance: the route for passengers from Ireland by the way of South Wales, lies through Milford and Haverfordwest, so that few strangers visit Pembroke except to satisfy their curiosity with a sight of its castle.

The rocky shores in this extremity of Pembrokeshire are broken by the violence of the sea into a number of little bays and creeks, that afford shelter to such a vast variety of uncommon marine animals, that I cannot refrain recommending them to the attention of the naturalist, as likely to afford considerable amusement. We made several excursions about the adjacent sea coasts, and also along the banks of the haven of Milford, with this view. Among the romantic sea-worn rocks, at a place called *Freshwater bay*, I was in particular successful. In the crevices of a rock I observed the *smooth Blenny* *, a small

* Blennius pholis.

species of fish far from common, except on the coast of Angleasea. Upon another of the rocks we saw *Chiton crinitus* *, the hairy chiton, in the greatest plenty. The *cancri* offered still more to interest us; upon a light, loose, sandy ridge, which to all appearance had been thrown up in a storm, were specimens of four distinct species, concealed among the marine exuvia, namely, *Latipes*, *longicornis*, *Cassivelaunus*, and a new species allied to *Corrugatus*, neither of which are common elsewhere †.

While speaking on this subject, it may be observed, that the turbot, sewen, whiting-pollach, and the bib, were the only sorts of fish we saw exposed in the course of two market days in Pembroke. The whiting-pollach, a fish of good quality for the table,

* Penn. Brit. Zool. where it is mentioned as an inhabitant of the sea near Aberdeen.

† This induced us to dredge afterwards on the same coast, but a few miles more to the eastward, where we found all these species alive, and in perfect condition.

appears

appears on many of their rocky shores during summer, but I never remember to have seen them in such immense numbers in any other part as in the sea of the St. George's channel, about the western extremity of Pembrokeshire.

CHAP. XX.

Ruin of an episcopal palace at Lantphey.—Manorbeer castle.—Pyr, or Pyrrhus, a sovereign of Britain, from whom this edifice is conjectured to derive its name.—Inland view of Tenby.—Maritime prospect of the bay from the cliffs delightful.—Origin of Tenby as a fashionable bathing place, exemplified in a local anecdote.—Obsolete religious custom observed in the ancient fisheries of the Welsh, retained at Tenby till very lately.—Abundance of fish in this part of the Severn sea.—Fisheries of the Tenby port on the decline:—Cause of this failure explained.—Sale of pickled oysters the principal support of the fishermen in winter.—Stackpole oysters of the same quality as those of the Tenby and Caldy roads.—Retrospective view of the history of Tenby.—Its ancient works of defence.

THE remains of Lantphey court, an object of considerable picturesque effect, though obscurely

scurely situated in an uninteresting tract of country, exists in nearly the same state of ruin and dilapidation as Mr. Grose describes it some years ago. It does not seem to have suffered any material demolition, at least since that time. The traveller approaches suddenly within sight of this ruined fabric, and at no great distance from it, after rambling about three miles to the eastward of Pembroke, in the direct road leading from that city towards the charming bathing town of Tenby.

Before the dissolution, this building was one of seven magnificent palaces attached to the see of St. David. Its ruins are extensive, and indicate pretty clearly that it was indeed worthy of being a principal residence of the first ecclesiastical establishment in Wales. At this period there is no record extant to enlighten the obscurity of its early history; even its founder is unknown.—From its style of architecture, it is presumed, with

some degree of probability, to be the work of bishop Gower, a distinguished prelate, who lived about the year 1335, the same as is generally believed to be the builder of the episcopal palace of St. David's.—Lantphey court cannot be said to emulate the costly grandeur of the former, either in point of size or decorations, but it has been still a noble and extensive building, and is in particular remarkable for exhibiting that peculiar sort of open gothic parapet which is observable in its more splendid form in the palace at St. David's.

In the grand military pageant given by Sir Rhys ap Thomas at Carew, in the reign of Henry the seventh, upon his receiving the order of the garter, Lantphey court is introduced as a scene of great ecclesiastical magnificence. The procession of the men at arms on one of the days, moved from Carew castle, headed by Sir Rhys ap Thomas, mounted on his war charger, and attended by a number

a number of valiant knights down to Lantphey court, where, after much parade and ceremony, Sir Rhys, and the principal knights, rode through the park, and were admitted on foot into the palace by the bishop of St. David's. The bishop was assisted on this occasion by the abbot of Talley, and the prior of Caermarthen; all of whom were dressed in their richest attire to receive them. The procession then walked twice or thrice round the court, Sir Rhys preceded by a trumpeter, heralds at arms, pages, and other attendants, marching at the head of the procession. In this manner they advanced to the chapel, the doors of which were shortly thrown open, and the company admitted. The bishop being arrived, ascended the high altar, and performed divine service with the assistance of a full choir. The whole ceremony was conducted with the greatest pomp, in honour of St. George, the tutelary saint, and patron of Sir Rhys, whose anniversary they were met to celebrate, and in homage of whom the

splendid festivity at Carew had been instituted.

There can scarcely, I should imagine, exist a doubt that Lantphey palace remained annexed to the see of St. David's till the reign of Henry the eighth. It has been questioned, but on very slender authority. Leland speaks of it in a manner to confirm this opinion. He tells us, in the reign of that monarch, that the bishop of St. David had "a place of stoone after castel faschion" at that period, in this very spot, which he describes correctly.—This was just before the dissolution. After that event it was alienated from the see, and granted with the manor by the crown, to Walter Devereux, Viscount Hereford, afterwards created earl of Essex. The Owens of Orielton became possessed of the estates of Lantphey, by purchase, from the heirs of the former family, about the beginning of the last century *.

* Buck.

The

The skeleton of a castle of great strength, and to all appearance of very high antiquity, invites the curiosity of the passing stranger about three miles further to the eastward on this road. This broke abruptly to view upon our right, occupying a conspicuous station at a little distance from the sea. We immediately proceeded towards it, and discovered it to be the castle of Manorbeer, a building that lays claim to a date about as early as the conquest of the Normans in this part of Britain. It is traditionally affirmed, that Manorbeer castle was built in the reign of William Rufus, though by whom it is not said; and that particular of its history appears so very uncertain, that conjecture even is perfectly at silence respecting it.

Giraldus Cambrensis, the historian of Wales, who was born at Tenby in the twelfth century, and resided within a few miles of the spot for years, may be supposed to have been as accurately informed of the history of this place as any one. He calls it the mansion

sion of Pyrrhus, and says it was in his time adorned with stately towers, and bulwarks, having a spacious haven on the west side, and under the walls to the north and northwest, an excellent fish pond.—The building to which Giraldus adverts, was most likely that whose ruins have survived the wreck of destructive time to this day, and which we now behold;—a structure evidently of an early date, but surely not antecedent to the Norman age. When therefore he emphatically denominates this castle, "the mansion of Pyrrhus," the ambiguity of the expression involves the mind in much uncertainty as to the interpretation it ought strictly to admit. We may conceive, for instance, that the present castle occupies the site of some more ancient fabric, built originally by Pyrrhus; or a building so called in compliment to his memory; or perhaps only from its local and approximate situation to the *Ynys Pyr*, or island of Pyr, (Caldy,) which, it is affirmed, derives its name from that sovereign. Either of these

these suggestions I think admissable, but to entertain for a moment the supposition that the present edifice was erected, or inhabited by that prince, would at best betray a very imperfect knowledge of British antiquities. Pyrrhus, whom the Welsh call Pyr, is recorded as a British king in the Welsh chronology; the sixty-first who reigned over Britain. The time in which he lived is thus laid down with tolerable accuracy. Various other circumstances concur to refer his æra to a period, nearly, if not entirely, as remote, as the time of Christ. Vortigern, for instance, was the twenty-first in succession after Pyr, and it is very certain he began his reign sometime about the year 448.

Leaving this deserted weather-beaten ruin, we had only four miles more of our journey to perform before we entered Tenby. The distant opening view of this town, as it meets the eye from various points of elevation which the road commands, is altogether spirited; it

rises

rises boldly upon the brow of an aspiring headland, hemmed in by marshes, and in part surrounded by the sea.

Towards the conclusion of our ride, the character of the place becomes at every step more interesting, bold, and dignified, but more especially as it is seen from the marshes into which the road descends before we proceed up the acclivity into the town.—Tenby, we are to recollect, was an important military post in former times. During the wars between the Norman and Flemish settlers, with the Cambrians in their neighbourhood, it has been oftentimes the theatre of disastrous conflicts between the contending parties. These are the principal and most distinguished features in its history, and lead us to contemplate its haughty mien, and the remains of its aged battlements, with some attention. The ruins of the old embattled walls are still rather considerable, and serve, from their position as well as strength, to convince us, that every advantage

vantage was taken of its situation as a place of defence; and that it was not more amply favoured by nature than improved by art.—The effect in this respect was accidentally heightened at the time of our arrival by the magnitude of the flood that rolled its waters from the channel, laving in its progress the side of the promontory, and overflowing the marshes to a very wide extent. There is at all times a narrow current through the marshes, along which the superabundant waters of an inland stream are discharged into the sea, but at high water, when the flood is enlarged by the briny tribute of the Severn, the passage to Tenby by fording, as usual at other times, becomes impracticable, or at least dangerous to attempt.—The foot passenger passes over the creek in perfect security when the water is at a moderate height, by stepping over a number of large stones that are placed across the bed of the stream for that purpose.

Tenby, including the old and new town, is of

of no small extent. The former, a place of considerable trade and wealth in the sixteenth century, is now the least respectable. Its streets are narrow, steep, and rugged, and the habitations very indifferent. This is the part chiefly occupied by petty shop-keepers, mariners, and the labouring part of the community. In the upper town, if it may so be named, are many genteel houses, fitted up for the reception of strangers, who resort hither in great numbers during the summer season for the benefit of sea bathing, or to enjoy the company of their friends, and the amusements of the place. The best houses are situated upon the brow of an abrupt precipice, the windows of which command the prospect of the bay in an admirable point of view.

I was rather fortunate in surveying the enchanting scenery of this bay, for the first time in my life, under the favour of a glorious autumnal sky, whose radiance, tempered with

with light fleecy clouds, richly harmonized with the prospect stretched below. The situation is peculiar. I paused for some few moments in silent rapture with it, fearless of being disturbed in my meditations, and enjoyed in tranquility that calm serenity of pleasure, with which the soul dilates in the contemplation of nature. A more lovely prospect I have seldom seen. Nor were these impressions of a transitory kind;—often as I have gazed from the cliffs upon it, I have experienced the same pleasure, and indulged the same sentiments.—Never have I been weary of admiring the majestic simplicity of the scenery it commands: the outline of which I shall attempt to trace. From a conviction that the original, in all its beauties, would defy the powers of verbal description, I dare not presume to offer a more finished picture.

Every desirable feature of a romantic sea coast is embraced within the range of the spectator's observation from different points of the

the cliffs contiguous to the town. The bay is spacious, and forms an area amidst the wildest assemblage of rocks the imagination can conceive. These are lofty, affording security and shelter to the bay they enclose. The dilapidated ruin of an old castle emerges upon the hill above the pier that skirts the south side of the bay, and below it are seen a little fort, and harbour crowded with shipping employed in the coasting trade, or fisheries of the severn sea. The sands and bay adjacent presents a busy spectacle of bathers and bathing machines, with the fishing boats of the town, near the waters edge, pursuing their customary occupations. Numerous vessels, skimming the surface of the translucent sea, enliven the remoter view, while the closing distance, half lost in hazy uncertainty, includes the pale features of the worms-head; those three gigantic rocky eminencies that form the extremity of the rude promontory of Rosilly, about nine leagues distance from the Tenby shore.

It

It must excite some little astonishment, that a situation which boasts such a variety of attractions, and so many advantages for sea bathing in comfort and security, should have remained neglected till within the last twenty years, and further still, that at a period much later the elevated spot on which the new town has partly risen, should be only occupied by the cottages of a few fishermen.

The circumstances that conspired in the outset to exalt Tenby to consideration as a bathing place, are rather extraordinary, and may be best explained by the recital of a local anecdote that came to our knowledge while we remained for a few days in the town. It appears from this relation that the ancient Welsh custom of reading prayers for the success of the fishery before the men ventured to cast their nets into the sea, was observed at this port with much religious scruple, till about five and twenty, or at most thirty years ago. There was a small chapel stationed on

a rocky projection of the shore, that was appropriated solely to the performance of this singular service. Thither the parish priest repaired before the fishery began, to invoke a benediction on the draught, and there his deputy remained to receive the tythe of the capture when the fishery was over. This custom, which had prevailed in monastic times throughout the Principality, had been sensibly on the decline for the last sixty years. In most of the fishing towns it became extinct by degrees, till at length about the time before-mentioned it only remained in force at Tenby. The worthy incumbent, aware of this, conceived it might as well be laid aside in his district. To this the fishermen had no objection, provided he should wave his tythe with the ceremony. But, if the tongue of rumour reports true, he tenaciously insisted this could not be right. Although the prayers were deemed superfluous, he seems to have considered it as a matter both of conscience and of duty to demand his share of

the

the capture as before. At last the altercation was happily terminated by mutual compromise, the clergyman consented to receive a moderate compensation in lieu of his tythe of fish, and the custom being abolished, the chapel was no longer useful to either party.

Thus the building remained deserted for some years, till an intelligent apothecary of Haverfordwest, Mr. Esau Jones, struck with its admirable situation for a bathing house, applied for leave to fit it up to his mind, for the accommodation of a few patients, to whom he had prescribed the use of the sea waters. This permission was no sooner obtained than put in execution, and thus the ci-devant chapel was transformed into a bathing-house; the first regular establishment of that kind ever projected at this fashionable watering place.

This event took place rather better than twenty years ago. In the first season the adventurer so far succeeded to his wishes, that on

the summer following he enlarged his scheme, and was able to accommodate a greater number of patients than in the year preceding. Other speculative strangers, encouraged by his example, erected two or three houses on the cliffs for the use of the summer visitors; then the hotel arose, and speedily after the new range of lodging houses began to assume a more important figure. The inference is natural: some of the adventurers have already retired in easy circumstances, acquired by their judicious and well-timed speculations, the place has increased in respectability, and rising every year into higher consideration, promises, at no very distant period, to become a spot of greater resort in the summer season, than perhaps any other bathing place on the coast of Wales.—The civic honors of this ancient town ought not to be forgotten: Tenby is a corporate town, governed by a mayor and other proper officers. The parliamentary interest prevails in favour of lord Cawdor, who has a splendid seat at Stackpole, fourteen computed miles to the westward.

Tenby,

Tenby, from time immemorial, is celebrated for the amazing abundance and variety of the fish tribe that haunt its shores, and the sea immediately adjacent, in allusion to which the Welsh call it Dynbegh-y-Piscoid. The fishermen of the place, a civil, well-disposed people, gave us a minute account of the fisheries upon this coast, a sort of information, it will be conceived, we could not derive from any better source of authority.

All the fisheries within a few miles of the shore, are to the full as productive as in former times. None, however, of the Tenby fishermen are able to avail themselves of this bounteous gift of Providence, with the exception of the littoral kinds that are taken close along the verge of the shore. This arises from their poverty. Their little property consisting only of a few open boats, with nets and dredges, upon a small scale, that are adapted only for the fishing in the bay, or just without the pier. It is the larger

vessels that are almost constantly hovering within sight of the Tenby shore, that hold the main concern of the fisheries. These vessels are the property of persons in Torbay, Brixham, and other of the western ports, who come to fish in this channel in preference to their own, and regularly convey their cargoes up the severn twice or thrice a week for the supply of the Bristol market. These vessels therefore, although they serve to swell the apparent consequence of Tenby, are in reality of little service to the place. During the first six days of the week they come into the harbour to refit or victual only, unless by chance they are driven in to seek shelter from a storm, but on the Saturday evening before sunset they invariably sail into port, furl their sails, and lay close in the bay till Monday morning, when they again hoist sail and put out to sea, hovering for the most part within sight of land as before.

Oysters of a size very far superior to any of

of those that are brought in common to the metropolis are found upon this particular coast of Pembrokeshire. The Bristol *oysters*, as they are termed, which are sent from that city as rarities to very remote parts of the country, are no other than the oysters imported from those beds. It is not a little remarkable that Owen speaks of this gigantic variety above two hundred years ago, a circumstance that proves, beyond a doubt, the locality of this kind:—"there is (observes this writer) a greate kinde of oyster gathered at Caldey and Stackpole, which being eaten rawe, seeme too strong a meate for weake stomakes, and must be parted in two, three, or foure peeces before he may be eaten, by reason of his exceeding bignes, and are not counted so pleasing as the former, which comes from Milford, and therefore are used in pies, stueings, broths, fried and boyled, wherein he is found most delicate."—It is the dredging for these oysters, and pickling them for exportation, that constitutes the chief employment of the Tenby fishermen in

the winter. The town was noted for those pickled oysters so far back as the middle of the last century, at which time, as we are informed by credible writers, they drove a good trade in that article *. In the present day the fishermen pursue the same line of occupation as their forefathers, but unfortunately for them, through the want of proper management, this little trade has been for some few years past on the decline. The bed of oysters, which for so long a period proved productive, is nearly exhausted now; insomuch indeed, that unless some salutary regulation should take place, and a small sum of money be expended, to the latter of which their means are incompetent, they will soon be destitute of this support.

This bed of oysters is a mile and an half in length, and a mile in breadth, lying duly to the north west of Caldy island. Another bed, the nearest to this, lies off Stackpole,

* Kitchen, 1754.

about

about fourteen miles to the westward, a distance too great for these poor people to attempt reaching in their open boats, except in summer, when with due encouragement they might be enabled to bring the spat at a comparatively small expense, to replenish the bed near their own shore.—How much is it to be regretted, that some generous, or even speculative individual, resident upon the spot, does not interfere in their behalf! The pickled oysters of this country are a valuable article of commerce in some distant parts of the world, so that a concern of this kind, by judicious management and connexions, might be rendered mutually advantageous to all parties. Or even a little fund might be very easily raised among the summer visitors for their assistance. Let us trust, for the credit of human nature, that there are few indeed among those whom Providence has blessed with a greater share of affluence than their fellow-beings, who cannot, do not feel as keenly for the wants of others as they could wish others

to

to feel for theirs, had fortune placed them in a lower rank of life; and surely then it must be said that the helping hand is never stretched forth in a better cause than to promote the honest endeavours of industry, depressed and shackled down by poverty. Four or five score pounds at most would answer every useful purpose. With this capital, under proper management, they would be enabled to restock the exhausted bed complete, and no less than sixty persons, including dredgers, picklers, and their infant families, would be thus humanely provided with a comfortable livelihood throughout the winter for many years to come;—a season when the perils of a stormy sea must totally prevent them from seeking it in their open boats, at a distance so remote from their native spot as Stackpole.

The inhabitants of Tenby, from the time of Henry the second till several centuries after, were, with little interruption, the Flemings who

who came over to this country in the reign of that king, and their descendants. They are now an evident intermixture of the Flemish character with the Welsh and English, and if it may be considered as any compliment, the language of the latter is universally spoken here. Most of the lower class of people pride themselves in being the descendants of the ancient Britons, and the idea they cherish in this respect, whether just or not, answers one good purpose; they are not so disaffected towards the neighbouring Welsh as the natives of Gower are, or those of some other parts of the adjoining counties retained by the Flemings exclusively to themselves till this time.—Tenby was one of the strongest places possessed by the Flemings from the time that people first settled in Pembrokeshire. The history of the country clearly proves it to have been the scene of frequent warfare between them and the native Welsh. Many times, with all its strength, it was unable to withstand the furious inroads, or well con-

certed

certed projects of the Cambrian princes, and more than once it has suffered destruction with fire and sword.

One of the events most deserving of mention in the history of this place, is recorded to have happened in the year 1150. An act that redounds to the no small discredit of the imprudent Flemings, drew upon them the resentment of the two young warriors, Meredith and Rhys, the sons of Gryffydh, then reigning prince of South Wales, and involved the country in all the horrors of a disastrous war. The Welsh penetrated into Gower, then inhabited by Flemings, and bearing down all before them as far as they proceeded, returned back with vast spoil; and two years after they took possession of Tenby. To attain the latter, an important object, they had marched during the night, approached the place unperceived, scaled the walls of the castle, and made the garrison prisoners before the governor of the place,

William

William Fitzgerald, had the slightest information of their designs. But the Welsh did not remain here long, they contented themselves with plundering the place, and ravaging the adjacent country as they marched back towards their home.—The occasion of this serious quarrel was briefly this: the Flemish inhabitants of the town had conceived some displeasure against Cadehl, another of Gryffydh's sons, and having surprised him whilst he was out with only a small number of his followers upon a hunting party, so severely wounded him that he escaped alive with the utmost difficulty. His two brothers above-mentioned vowed vengeance for this their treacherous conduct, and if the bloodshed that afterwards marked their career through the Flemish territories of Gower and Tenby could expiate the offence, their revenge was complete.

In the year 1188 Tenby was again taken by the Welsh: that successful warrior, Maelgon, the son of Rhys, prince of South Wales, seized

seized upon it at that time by assault, and burnt the town to ashes.—Under Henry the eighth the place was in a respectable state of defence. "The towne was strongeli waullid, and welle gatid, every gate having his port collis ex solido ferro." But, adds Leland, to whom we stand indebted for this information, "that gate that ledith to Cairmardin ward is most semeliest, as circulid without with an embatelid but open rofid towr, after the fascion of the east gate of Pembroke."

The dilapidated remnants of its castle, perched upon the summit of the rocks, form one of the most picturesque features in the prospect over the bay of Tenby. The principal gateway, and much of the ancient walls remain, although in a mutilated condition.—Its military works of modern date, are of small importance, consisting only of a small battery of four eighteen pounders, and four other guns of the same bore, posted on the

the rocks on one side of the bay. These were prudently placed here in the course of the last war, as a check upon the audacity of the French privateers, which having at times found their way into the Bristol channel, it was seriously apprehended might pay this port a visit; in the event of which it would have been very possible for them to have singled out their prizes as they lay in the harbour, and borne them off in the face of the town unmolested.—Whether the whole extent of sea coast on this side of Pembrokeshire and the maritime parts of the adjacent county of Caermarthen be sufficiently protected from the insults of our inveterate depredators in this respect, must rest with the opinion of persons more conversant with such affairs than I am. I should however rather think they are not, and that were batteries of this description more frequent in convenient situations along the coast, it would contribute to the quiet, if not security, of our coasters in the channel. We have witnessed, more

than

than once, the consternation of the little sea ports in those parts, where they had no such means of defence to rely upon, at receiving the intelligence of a petty French privateer being observed hovering in the roads, and about the coast.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Excursion along the coast of Tenby.—Sublimity of its sea-beaten shores at the hour of sun rise.—Posture of the town upon the cliffs uncommonly fine from sea.—Visit to Caldy island, the Ynys Pyr of the Britons:—its inhabitants;—emoluments arising to the landholders from the amazing number of wild rabbits.—Rocky precipices on this coast the resort of puffins and other sea birds.—Storm at sea approaching.—Perilous adventure in the return to land.—Testaceological rarieties scattered upon the sands by the violence of the waves.—Scarce species of the fish tribe observed in this neighbourhood.—Its marine productions considered generally.—Unfortunate loss of the late Mr. Adams at sea, a naturalist resident in the town of Pembroke.—Sea bathing, a familiar practice among the lower orders of both sexes upon the coast of Tenby.

BEFORE we bade adieu to Tenby, I proposed

posed to devote the whole of one long summer's day to a coasting voyage along the shores, within a convenient distance of the land.

The motives for this excursion were various. My companion was anxious to inspect two or three remarkable caverns upon this coast, which, although they may be partly visited by land at low water, are accessible at other times only in a boat. These I wished to see also, but I was not less desirous of observing the various natural products of the sea, and sea coast, so far as such a voyage of observation would permit, after visiting those caverns. The accounts I had received from the fishermen, concerning the oyster beds in the Tenby roads, had excited curiosity, and this I intended to examine in the course of our progress. While we should be rambling over the rocks, we thought it might be possible to ascend some of the cliffs upon which the Puffins, and some other species of sea birds, swarm, in the breeding season, to observe their mode of incubation.

And

And above all, I was inclined to bestow as much attention as leisure would permit, to the island of Caldy, a little tract of land that was long since introduced to the notice of the naturalist by the ingenious Dr. Woodward, for the variety of native and extraneous fossils he discovered here.

Such were the leading objects we had in view.—Our marine excursion commenced under auspicious circumstances. It was scarcely twilight when we were rowed out of the Tenby harbour in one of the open pleasure boats of the place, that had been hired on a former day for the occasion. At first we glided slowly and with caution, for fear of accident, till we entered the open sea, by doubling the projection of the point. From this position we were much struck with the awful prospect that opened before us, a scene as impressibly bold as it was new, and unanticipated.—The swarthy range of rocks that stretch along this part of the coast, are in a singular

degree romantic.—Their capricious features, wild, and beetling; or broken into an inexpressible variety of chasms, and recesses of fantastic character, evince at once their exposure to the assaults of a tumultuous sea, and the evidence of its outrage. As we passed close along the shore, the effect produced was truly grand. The clouds still lingered upon their shaggy summits, enlarging their dark deceptive forms in the hazy mantling of their embrace, and at the same time casting a dismal stretch of shadow, deep and black, upon the abyss of the sea below:—"the grey mists of ocean swam slowly by"—"the sea came with its waves, and roared on their hardened sides."

While our little bark still hovered about the shore, the blushing east began to unveil its charms;—the earnest of approaching light, first faintly tremulous, appeared in crimson streaks upon the grey skirts of heaven, then gradually diffusing a more ruddy tint upon the

the expansive æther. A brighter glow, a lustre yet more vivid, spread upon the horizon. The murky vapours breaking, dispersed and faded as "the orb of light" emerged above the trembling surface of the waves, arrayed in all its splendour.—How glorious is the return of day to a benighted world!—What sentiments of adoration towards the beneficent and all-powerful Creator of the universe, does such a sight inspire in the heart of grateful man!—To behold it with indifference, must be impossible. We were lost in admiration in witnessing, as it were, the revival of drowsy nature from her slumbers, every moment operating a change in the character of the surrounding scene. The lucid waters, gentle as an inland lake, glittered in the eastward with the full flood of light, reflected upon the rippling surface. By slow degrees the mists of morning shrunk from the distant cliffs to the westward, disclosing in that direction the rude obtrusive features of Leadstep point, with Stackpole head, and the point of Gower

faintly receding beyond it. Before us the town of Tenby rose in all its pride upon the summit of the aspiring rocks. To the eastward the triple prominencies of the worm's head were faintly visible, while every other object seemed obsorbed, and lost, in the blaze of solar light.—Now that the most perfect calm prevailed, for scarcely a breath of wind disturbed the tranquillity of the scene, our sails were useless, the seamen depended only upon their oars, and these they plied so manfully, that we were speedily wafted to the distance of a league, or better, from the shore.

In the sea round Caldy island, we captured many of the *Medusæ* in the trawl net that had been previously fastened to the end of the boat by the fishermen. One of these, a remarkable, though not uncommon species, is *Medusa purpura*; a sort distinguished by having a light purple cross in the center of the body, with a horse-shoe mark of the same colour, only darker, between each of the bars. Another kind, captured in the same manner, has

has a milk-white cross upon the body, a characteristic mark, by means of which the species *cruciata* is discriminated.—As the creatures of this tribe rove about in search of food along the surface of the sea, they shine with uncommon splendour, especially when the sun strikes directly on them, or in the night time when it is very dark, appearing in the latter instance highly luminous, and phosphoric. These, with a variety of other marine vermes, and fish of a small size, are the principal food of the corvorants, gulls, and a host of other sea fowl that haunt the rocks upon this coast.

Shaping our course to the south west of Caldy island, we soon arrived upon the oyster bed described on a former occasion. The dredging tackle being incomplete, we were content to take a few only of the oysters from the bed. These are of a larger size than any I ever saw before on other parts of the British coasts by nearly one half. Some of the

largest I had the curiosity to measure, one of which proved to be no less than nineteen inches in the exterior circumference of the shell. The fish we tasted; it has a strong flavour, and is by no means to my mind so pleasant, or so palatable as that of the smaller kinds of oyster when eaten raw, although for culinary purposes they may be equally good, or as many esteem them, very far superior.

I was astonished at the number of Asterias, echini, and other offensive creatures that infest the oyster beds. These prowl about to the great annoyance of the oysters; the asterias, or star fish in particular, which are highly injurious to them. When these creatures find an oyster open, or gaping to take its food, they instantly seize upon it by thrusting one of their long straggling arms into them, and killing the animal before it is able to close the shell, in which case one of the star-fish enters the oyster, and remains in perfect security to devour the contents. Or should the oyster be apprised

apprised in time of the imminent danger to which it is exposed, the moment the arm of the star-fish is inserted, it snaps the shell close, and the asterias, unless very dexterous, is compelled to retreat with the loss of the arm, or ray so offending; a mutilation of the less importance to this animal, since time will repair the mischance by producing another arm, though somewhat of a smaller size, in lieu of that which the oyster has deprived it of.—The echini are more destructive to the young spat of the oyster, whose tender shells they bruize with those formidable spines with which their bodies are completely covered, or macerate them with their teeth; the firm grasp of which their tender shells are unable to resist. The species most injurious is the edible one, *esculentus*, which grows here to a large size. The latter is known upon most of our sea coasts by the name of *sea-eggs*, sea *hedge-hogs*, and various other local epithets. In former times they were esteemed dainties for the tables of the great,

great, and even now when boiled are eaten by some people.

Of the Asterias genus we observed a variety of species here, the most abundant of which were *glacialis*, and the common sort; *Papposa*, or thirteen-rayed star-fish, which last is of a beautiful carmine colour on the upper surface, and has generally, though not invariably, thirteen rays or arms. In addition to these, we collected some fine specimens of *Asterias Lacertosa, Sphærulata*, and *oculata*.—The most curious of the Cancri tribe discovered here were *Cancer Tuberosus*, and another of the same diminutive size, the *Cancer asper*, of Pennant; neither of which are common: these occurred with the more frequent kinds in the slutch drawn up contiguous to this oyster bed. —Mactra lutraria, I am told, on credible authority, is an inhabitant of the shores of Caldy, and as I should imagine, at no great distance from this spot, for although we did not happen to meet with any of these alive, the

the fragments of dead shells, of various sizes, thrown upon the stretch of sands at no great distance seem to warrant that opinion.

That we might not be interrupted in the arrangement of our day's excursion, we had taken care to provide some cold refreshments which we carried with us in the boat, and after rowing about till noon, landed upon the shore of Caldy island, with the intention of partaking of this repast.

Proceeding up the island, we could not avoid observing it to be thinly inhabited, and so far as we went, at least, in a meagre state of cultivation. Formerly it was represented as being very fertile, and yielding corn in plenty, but so infested by pirates that they dared not plough with oxen lest the marauders should carry them off with other booty in their occasional visits. There are scarcely more than half a dozen houses on the island, a tract of land extending, according to the common estimate,

mate, a mile in length, and half a mile in breadth.—We understood the whole island to be in the possession of a principal farmer, who has resided on it for some years, and who had lately made a purchase of it from the former owner. Wild rabbits are every where abundant on this spot beyond conception. We were assured indeed they are so numerous here that the skins of those taken annually have commonly realized, when sold, more than sufficient to pay half the yearly rental of the island.—It is no matter of astonishment that the skins of those animals should produce so large a sum, in comparison of the value of the land: an instance of this kind, but far more singular, is recorded of another similar island on the Pembrokeshire coast, by Owen, in his history of the country. He tells us the pasture of the island of Stockholme near the entrance of Milford Haven, and Scalmy, while they formed part of the lordship of Haverford-West, was estimated at the annual value of

fifty

fifty five shillings, and the conies on the land at fourteen pounds five shillings.

The inhabitants of Caldy, it is asserted, are exempted from the pressure of many taxes because it has not yet been accurately decided to what hundred of Pembrokeshire, the island belongs. Contiguous to great Caldy is a small island situated between it and the land, called Little Caldy, which last belongs to the manor of Manorbeer and Penally. In the time of Leland there was a priory on the great Caldy, called Lille, besides a parish church, &c.—It has been already intimated that Caldy bears the name of *Ynys Pyr*, or the *island of Pyr*, in the vernacular language of the country.

Woodward speaks of a sort of black marble found in Caldy island, the quarry of which might possibly still be worked to advantage; it is perfectly black, without the least admixture of white, similar to that found in Derbyshire, and other parts of Britain. Upon the

the shore I picked up many fragments of coarse granite, calcareous spars, fossil madrepores, and other specimens of no great consequence to the mineralogist. A coarse granite, of a dirty reddish colour, prevails throughout many parts of the island.—The higher crags that overlook the sea, are tenanted by a multitude of sea fowl, such as the puffin, and the guillemot, with corvorants, oyster catchers, gulls, and terns, all which resort to those rocks in great number during the summer season. The puffin, and the guillemot are both birds of passage, coming to the rocks in immense flocks, about the middle, or towards the end of the month of April, and remaining here till August.—Our seamen facetiously called the puffin the *Welsh Parrot*, the true name of which is Elegug, or Helegug in the language of the country. It is astonishing with what a degree of nicety the female puffin lays its egg, (for it only lays one at a time) close in many instances to the very brink of the precipices where

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the equipoise would be lost by the slightest touch, and the egg be dashed to pieces upon the rocks below, or be thrown into the sea. And yet this accident rarely happens through the want of circumspection in the puffins, who in other respects appear to be a stupid race of birds. Sometimes the eggs are overthrown by the rabbits running to and fro near their old haunts, the burrows, which they inhabit during the winter: for it is worthy of remark, that the puffins, on their arrival in the spring, never fail to drive the rabbits from their burrows to spare the trouble of constructing others for themselves.—The seamen gather the eggs of the puffin from the rocks, and sell them. Sometimes, for amusement, when they have driven the puffin from her sitting place on the ledge of the cliffs, and taken the egg, they will endeavour to restore it to its former equipoise in the same spot, knowing how difficult this is to be accomplished, but they scarcely ever succeed in such attempts: some of them have a notion that when once removed,

moved, it cannot be replaced as it was before, conceiving that the egg, when first laid must be affixed, or cemented in some peculiar manner to the naked face of the stone, to prevent its rolling off. I have eaten of the young puffins pickled, in the island of Anglesea, and think them excellent when when highly seasoned with spices.

Our perambulations upon the shore of Caldy island had occupied the earlier part of the afternoon; when the seamen who accompanied us began to express their fears of a storm that appeared to be hastily approaching, and advised us to reimbark without delay, as it might otherwise be difficult to reach the Tenby harbour in our open boat. This advice we readily complied with, for the atmosphere at every moment became more dismally overcast and black. But we had not however proceeded far before the squall overtook us. Every exertion to gain the shore now proved ineffectual. The more we strove, the further our crazy bark

bark was hurried out to sea. With difficulty the seamen hoisted up an old tattered sail that laid in the boat, with the intention of making an oblique tack either back to Caldy, or to the land to the westward, the wind being utterly against our return to Tenby, but scarcely had this been up a moment, when the force of the wind rent the greater part of it from the cordage, and rendered it in a manner useless. Thus for nearly an hour, unable to make any shore, we lay exposed to the rage of the contending elements in the open sea, expecting at every breath our little boat would upset, and plunge us into the merciless abyss of the deep. The seamen, inured to peril, treated the matter lightly.—"Pho!" said one of them, "this is nothing: there is no danger unless we ship a wave." But the words had barely escaped his lips, when a wave burst clear over the top of the mast. A second wave followed immediately, which breaking short, half filled our boat with water, at the same time knocking the seaman back-

wards. Danger, upon their own acknowledgement, was now apparent, for had this wave been succeeded by another, nothing could have saved the boat from sinking. I must confess, that being no hero on this occasion, I was seriously disposed to think every moment might be our last. Providentially this was the worst. The wind almost immediately shifting to another point, when a furious gust drove us rapidly towards the rocks to the south west of Tenby, just as the people ashore at the inn, after observing our situation out at sea for some time, without a possibility of affording us assistance, were led to conclude, from the sudden disappearance of the boat, that we were lost.

Towards evening the tide ebbed, the squall subsided, and the adjacent shores where the sand prevails, were bestrewed with an amazing variety of marine productions, some of which are estimable for their rarity. Among many others of the tellen genus, *Tellina depressa*, the

squalida

squalida of Solander, a very scarce and beautiful coloured species, appeared upon the sands in great profusion; when fine, these are of a rich golden yellow, shading to an orange. *Tellina fabula*, another rarity, was equally abundant. The last, which is a remarkably delicate shell, is distinguished by a very peculiar character, one valve being marked all over the exterior surface with close and regularly waved striæ, resembling so many scratches made with the point of a needle, but on the opposite valve, not the least appearance of any such striæ is observable, that being on the outside perfectly smooth and glossy. This shell is about the size of a finger nail, of a whitish colour, and somewhat pellucid, with a beautiful tinge of pink blending into a fine, but pale orange, near the beak and middle, when the animal is alive. Numbers of the *Sabella tubiformis* shell, with the living *Nereis*, their natural inhabitant inclosed within them, had been recently washed out of their native beds, and thrown upon the surface of the sands. Even

the deserted shells are uncommon in such situations, but with the animal alive in them, are much less frequent still. *Mya Prætenuis*, another rare shell, appeared in plenty. *Solen ensis* likewise in abundance, and in fine perfection. And *Voluta tornatilis*, with the animal alive, which I met with here, should be esteemed no less curious than the rest.

While we are dwelling upon this subject, some further observations of a more general nature may be allowed. It is but candid to believe myself upon the whole not more assiduous in my researches about this place than some other individuals who have been attracted thither with views in many respects similar to my own. I allude of course to those only whose observations are already before the world. If I have been more happy in my enquiries on this head, it must have arisen from this obvious cause, that while I remained here, my attention was in a peculiar manner directed to the productions of the sea

coast,

coast, a department of considerable interest, and for the investigation of which, no situation whatever can be more admirably adapted than the neighbourhood of Tenby.

The observations of the indefatigable Woodward, afford a proof of the attention bestowed long since upon this spot in a geological view. A number of the fossils, both native and extraneous, spoken of in his writings, were discovered about the rocks of Tenby and the island of Caldy. True it is, the result of his enquiries are of little consideration with the naturalist of the present day, but this is only because those matters are better and more generally understood at this period than in the days of Woodward, when geology was in its cradle. But the merit of Woodward remains the same. He had not the advantages of the modern school, but he accomplished great things. His merit suffers no detraction from this consideration, as he wrote for the day in which he lived, and would

have written better on this topic were he living now. Llwyd paid attention to this spot: his views were different from those of Woodward, and embraced a wider field. To him the naturalist is believed to owe the discovery of *Asterias minuta*, a species that occurred to him near Tenby, and which has since been found, though rarely, in the sands of Tenby harbour.—There was still another individual, to whom the adjacent coast was a favourite place of research in such pursuits, whose name deserves to be mentioned with deep and sincere regret:—it is already anticipated by the naturalist, that I allude to the late unfortunate Mr. Adams, of Pembroke, a character as highly respectable in the paths of private life, as valuable for his intellectual worth, and knowledge of the science of natural history in particular. This gentleman was a member of the Linnean Society, an honourable distinction, to which he attained very shortly after the institution of that society, in the year 1794. It is imagined to have been

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in the prosecution of his endeavours to promote the laudable purpose for which the society was founded, that he lost his life, though this is not entirely certain. Conchology, as is well known from two of his papers, published in the transactions of that society, was one of his most favourite studies. In the acquirement of this species of rational knowledge, he was oftentimes induced to take excursions to sea about the shores of Pembroke, where it was his delight to trawl and dredge for the shells himself, and where he must in consequence have enriched his collection with many interesting acquisitions. He was out in one of these marine excursions in his pleasure boat, on the fatal morning alluded to, when he incautiously ventured too far from land with a heavy stress of sail, the boat unfortunately upset, and every soul on board perished.

Among the variety of fish that haunt the shores adjacent, the abundance of its flat fish merit some notice. Turbot, brill, soles, scate, and

and most of the ray tribe, are taken here of a large size, and in great perfection. Among others, the Torpedo, or Electric Ray, has been observed in this part of the Severn sea, once or twice within memory; a rare occurrence this, for although the torpedo is occasionally found at certain seasons of the year in the vicinity of Torbay upon the western coasts, it is very scarce on any other of the coasts of England. But another creature of the finny tribe, far more remarkable in its appearance, that has been caught in this sea, is the oblong Diodon, a fish that must appear to the casual observer as a creature accidentally deprived of the tail, or rather of the posterior half of its body. Of this species I was so fortunate as to obtain a fine specimen, rather less than a span in length, besides the dried skin of another about twenty inches long, which had been some time before cast upon the sands, and was preserved as a curiosity by one of the inhabitants of the town.

We

We had heard much of the *turbot-meat* from the fishermen of this port, a sort of *vermes*, which they described as a small white slug, about an inch in length, with a nail on the back. They call it *turbot-meat*, because they conceive that fish subsists chiefly upon it, and will venture even close to the shallows of the sands in quest of it, although at other times the turbot is a timid fish. By chance, in one of the little sandy bays on this coast, I had an opportunity of ascertaining what they meant, a number of them being drawn ashore in their nets. It proved to be the *Bulla aperta*, a species of limax, bearing, as they observed, a sort of nail, or shell on the dorsal part, the shell of this species being by no means large enough to envelop the animal. The shell itself has been heretofore esteemed a rarity by conchologists, but from this source of information it evidently appears, that neither the shells, nor the animals with the shells, can be uncommon here. I afterwards found

them

them in greater plenty in the trawling net of the fishermen. The local observations of these people, I should therefore imagine to be correct, from whence we are to infer, that the Bulla aperta is the principal food of the turbot here, as they are of the cod-fish in the seas of Newfoundland.

Most of the rocks in sheltered situations, from the surface of the sea upwards to high water mark, are incrusted with the conic kinds of Lepas, or Balani, in great profusion, as are also many of the rocks about Caldy, and in the bay of Tenby. Among these I remarked in particular, that the elongated variety of the species *Balanoides*, which some consider as a distinct species, is not uncommon, and may be traced in all its transitions, from its most depressed form, to those which are perfectly cylindrical, narrow, and measure an inch and a half, or more in length. This variety, for most assuredly it is nothing

nothing more, is distinguished by its linear structure, appearing as it were seated upon a long peduncle, or foot stalk, which form the animal assumes in the construction of its shell at the base, when straitened for room by the surrounding *balani.*

The sands embayed amidst the rocks to the southward of the town, during our stay at Tenby, proved uncommonly productive of the rarer species of the testaceous tribe, at the ebb of every tide.—But in those lonely haunts the naturalist will not always find himself secluded from intrusion. Those recesses among the rocks, are the places to which the female peasantry oftentimes resort in parties during the day time, when the weather is sultry, to enjoy, without disguise, the delicious coolness and delight of bathing in the open sea. While wandering about the rocks upon this craggy shore, it is no unusual circumstance for the stranger to break abruptly upon the retirement of a groupe of those fair

damsels,

damsels, sporting in the briny waves, beneath the shelter of the cliffs at noon :—

" Undique dant saltus ; multaque aspergine rorant :
Emerguntque iterum : redeuntque sub æquora rursus :
Inque chori ludunt speciem :"— OVID.

FINIS.

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